

AFRICA

ANGOLA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 774,200 square miles, and its population is approximately 12 million. Christianity is the religion of the vast majority of the country's population, with Roman Catholicism as the country's largest single denomination. The Roman Catholic Church claims 5 million adherents, but such figures could not be verified. The major Protestant denominations also are present, along with a number of indigenous African and Brazilian Christian denominations. The largest Protestant denominations include the Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists (United Church of Christ), and Assemblies of God. The largest syncretic religious group is the Kimbanguist Church, whose followers believe that a mid-20th century Congolese pastor named Joseph Kimbangu was a prophet. A small portion of the country's rural population practices animism or traditional indigenous religions. There is a small Islamic community based around migrants from West Africa. There are a few atheists in the country.

In colonial times, the country's coastal populations primarily were Catholic while the Protestant mission groups were active in the interior. With the massive social displacement caused by 26 years of civil war, this rough division is no longer valid.

Foreign missionaries were very active prior to independence in 1975, although the Portuguese colonial authorities expelled many Protestant missionaries and closed mission stations based on the belief that the missionaries were inciting pro-independence sentiments. Missionaries have been able to return to the country since the early 1990's, although security conditions due to the civil war have made it impossible for them to return to most parts of the interior.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors.

The Government does not require religious groups to register. Colonial era statutes banned all non-Christian religious groups from Angola; while those statutes still exist, they are no longer in effect. In March 2001, Minister Tjipilica announced that colonial-era law granting civil registration authority to the churches is to be put back into effect.

A Luanda Catholic FM radio station, Radio Ecclesia, broadcasts weekly several hours of church services and overtly religious programming. State-owned television also broadcasts live Sunday morning Catholic Church services.

The post-independence Government was a one-party state until 1991 and had nationalized all church schools and clinics; however, since that time, all schools and

clinics have been returned to the churches, and the Government permits churches and missions to start schools.

During a Catholic bishops' conference in March 2001, the Government asked the Catholic Church for assistance in implementing the Peace and Reconciliation Fund and for support in carrying out social programs in the country.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Members of the clergy in government-held areas regularly use their pulpits to criticize government policies. There were unconfirmed reports that in May 2001, the state radio censored remarks made by the Archbishop of Lubango, Dom Zacarias Kamuenho, publicly criticizing both the Government and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) on behalf of the Catholic Church after a UNITA raid on the town of Caxito on May 5; however, the Government permitted Dom Zacharia's statement to be broadcast in full on Catholic Radio Ecclesia.

While in general the rebel group UNITA permitted freedom of religion, interviews with persons who left UNITA-controlled areas revealed that the clergy did not enjoy the right to criticize UNITA policies.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

In January 1999, unknown gunmen killed Father Albino Saluaco, a Catholic parish priest, and two catechists in a town in the province of Huambo that was under UNITA military occupation. No group has claimed responsibility for the incident.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are amicable relations between the country's religious denominations, and there is a functioning ecumenical movement, particularly in support of peace.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

Embassy officials and official visitors from the U.S. routinely meet with the country's religious leaders in the context of peacekeeping, democratization, development, and humanitarian relief efforts. Church groups are key members of the country's civil society movement and are consulted regularly by embassy officials. Embassy officials, including the Ambassador, the Director of the U.S. Agency for International Development, and others, maintain an ongoing dialog with the leaderships of all of the country's religious denominations.

BENIN

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 42,711 square miles, and its population in 2000 was 6,396,591. Reliable statistics on religious affiliation are not available; however, according to most estimates, approximately 25 percent of the population nominally are Christian, and approximately 15 percent nominally are Muslim. At least 60 percent of the population adheres to one form or another of traditional indigenous religions. Many persons who nominally identify themselves as Christian or Muslim also practice traditional indigenous religions. Among the most commonly

practiced traditional indigenous religion is the animist “vodoun” system of belief, which originated in this area of Africa. Almost all citizens appear to be believers of a supernatural order. There practically are no atheists.

Over half of all Christians are Roman Catholics. Other groups include Baptists, Methodists, Assembly of God, Pentecostals, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Celestial Christians, Rosicrucians, the Unification Church, Eckankar, Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Baha’i Faith. Nearly all Muslims adhere to the Sunni branch of Islam. The few Shi’a Muslims primarily are Middle Eastern expatriates. No data presently are available on active participation in formal religious services or rituals.

There are Christians, Muslims, and adherents of traditional indigenous religions throughout the country. However, most adherents of the traditional Yoruba religion are in the south, while other traditional indigenous faiths are followed in the north. Muslims are represented most heavily in the north and in the southeast. Christians are prevalent in the south, particularly in Cotonou, the economic capital. It is not unusual for members of the same family to practice Christianity, Islam, traditional indigenous religions, or several combinations of all of these.

Foreign missionary groups presently known to be operating in the country include the Watchtower Society, Adventist Frontier Missions, Society in Mission (SIM), and the Evangelical Baptist Mission.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

Persons who wish to form a religious group must register with the Ministry of the Interior. Registration requirements are identical for all religious groups, and there were no reports that any group had been refused permission to register or had been subjected to unusual delays or obstacles in the registration process. Religious groups are free from taxation. The Government accords respect to prominent religious leaders and different faiths.

Missionary groups operate freely throughout the country.

In accordance with Article 2 of the Constitution, which provides for a secular state, public schools are not authorized to provide religious instruction.

Three Muslim, six Christian, and one traditional indigenous religious holidays are observed officially: Ramadan, Tabaski, Maouloud; Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Whit Monday, Assumption Day, All Saints Day, Christmas, and traditional Religions Day (January 10).

State-run television features coverage of the celebration of religious holidays and special events in the lives of prominent religious leaders, including ordination anniversaries and funerals.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government’s refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Due possibly to the diversity of religious affiliations within families and communities, religious tolerance is widespread at all levels of society and in all geographic regions. Relations generally are amicable between the many religious groups. Interfaith dialog occurs regularly, and citizens respect different religious traditions and practices, including syncretistic beliefs.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

BOTSWANA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 227,344 square miles and its population is approximately 1,611,000. About half of the country's citizens identify themselves as Christians. Anglicans, Methodists, and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa—formerly the London Missionary Society—claim the majority of Christian adherents. There also are congregations of Lutherans, Roman Catholics, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, the Dutch Reformed Church, and other Christian denominations. Most other citizens adhere to traditional indigenous religions or to a mixture of religions. In recent years, a number of churches of West African origin have begun holding services and draw good-sized crowds with a charismatic blend of Christianity and traditional indigenous religions. There is a small Muslim community—approximately 2 to 3 percent of the population—primarily of South Asian origin, and a very small Baha'i community. It is unknown if there are any atheists in the country.

Foreign missionary groups operate in the country, including Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Quakers, Baptists, Lutherans, Catholics, and a number of independent evangelical and charismatic Christian groups.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion. The Constitution also provides for the protection of the rights and freedoms of other persons, including the right to observe and practice any religion without the unsolicited intervention of members of any other religion.

All religious organizations must register with the Government. To register, a group submits its constitution to the Ministry of Home Affairs. After a generally simple bureaucratic process, the organization is registered. There are no legal benefits for registered organizations. Unregistered groups potentially are liable to penalties including fines up to \$178 (1,000 Pula), up to 7 years in jail, or both. Except for the case of the Unification Church, there is no indication that any religious organization has ever been denied registration.

The Constitution provides that every religious community may establish places for religious instruction at the community's expense. The Constitution prohibits forced religious instruction, forced participation in religious ceremonies, or taking oaths that run counter to an individual's religious beliefs.

There are no laws against proselytizing.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Constitution provides for the suspension of religious freedom in the interests of national defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health; however, any suspension of religious freedom by the Government must be deemed "reasonably justifiable in a democratic society."

In 1984 the Unification Church was denied registration by the Ministry of Home Affairs on the public order grounds stipulated in the Constitution. The Government also perceived the Unification Church to be anti-Semitic and denied it registration because of another constitutional provision that protects the rights and freedoms of individuals to practice their religion without intervention. In the intervening 17 years, the Unification Church has petitioned the offices of the President and Vice President without success, but has made no move to challenge the Ministry's decision in the courts. It is unclear whether the Unification Church maintained a presence in the country during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the country's religious communities generally are amicable.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

BURKINA FASO

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 105,689 square miles, and its total population is 11,600,000. There is no single dominant religion. Exact reliable statistics on religious affiliation are not available. Approximately 50 percent of the population practice Islam, approximately 20 percent practice Roman Catholicism, approximately 5 percent are members of various Protestant denominations, and 25 percent practice traditional indigenous religions exclusively. However, syncretistic beliefs and practices are widespread among both Christians and Muslims, and a majority of citizens continue to practice traditional indigenous religions to varying degrees. Almost all citizens are believers in a supernatural order and atheism is virtually non-existent. The majority of the country's Muslims belong to the Sunni branch of Islam, while small minorities adhere to the Shi'a or Tidjania branches.

Muslims are concentrated largely around the northern, eastern, and western borders, while Christians are concentrated in the center of the country. Traditional indigenous religions are practiced widely throughout the country, especially in rural communities. Ouagadougou, the capital, is mostly Christian, and Bobo-Dioulasso, the country's second largest city, is largely Muslim. The country has a small Lebanese immigrant community, whose members are both Muslim and Christian.

Members of the dominant ethnic group, the Mossi, belong to all three major religions. Fulani and Jula groups overwhelmingly are Muslim. There is little correlation between religious differences and political differences. Religious affiliation appears unrelated to membership in the ruling party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress. Government officials belong to all of the major religions.

Foreign missionary groups are active in the country, and include the Assemblies of God, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Christian Missionary Alliance, Baptists, Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Mennonite Central Committee, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), the Pentecostal Church of Canada, the World Evangelical Crusade, the Society for International Missions, and numerous Roman Catholic organizations.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. Islam, Christianity, and traditional indigenous religions are practiced freely without government interference. There is no official state religion, and the Government neither subsidizes nor favors any particular religion.

The practice of a particular faith is not known to entail any advantage or disadvantage in the political arena, the civil service, the military, or the private sector.

The Government requires that religious groups register with the Ministry of Territorial Administration. Registration establishes a group's legal presence in the country but entails no specific controls or benefits. Religious groups only are taxed if they carry on lucrative activities, such as farming. Registration only confers legal status. There are no penalties for failure to register. All groups are given equal access to licenses, and the Government does not approve registrations in an arbitrary manner.

Foreign missionary groups, including Protestants, operate freely and face no special restrictions. The Government neither forbids missionaries from entering the country nor restricts their activities.

Religious instruction is not offered in public schools; it is limited to private schools and to the home. Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant groups operate primary and secondary schools. The State monitors both the nonreligious curriculum and the qualifications of teachers employed at these schools. Although school officials must submit the names of their directors to the Government, the State never has been involved in appointing or approving these officials. The Government does not fund any religious school. Unlike other private schools, religious schools pay no taxes if they do not conduct any lucrative activities.

Religious groups are free to say what they want in their publications and broadcasts unless the judicial system determines that they are harming public order or committing slander; this never has occurred. The Ministry of Security grants publishing licenses, and the Superior Council of Information (CSI) grants broadcasting licenses. The Government never has denied a publishing or broadcasting license to any religious group that has requested one. The procedures for applying for publishing and broadcasting licenses are the same for both religious groups and commercial entities. Applications first are sent for review to the Ministry of Information and then forwarded to the Ministry of Security. If the Government does not respond to the application for a publishing license within the required timeframe, the applicant can begin publishing automatically. For radio licenses, before beginning broadcasts the applicant must wait until the Authority for the Regulation of Telecommunications (ARTEL) assigns a frequency and determines that the group's broadcasting equipment is of a professional quality. The Ministry of Security has the right to request samples of proposed publications and broadcasts to verify that they are in accordance with the stated nature of the religious group; however, there were no reports of religious broadcasters experiencing difficulties with this regulation. In the case of radio stations, the CSI must be informed of the name of the broadcasting director as well as a general programming content. Once the broadcast license is granted, the Government regulates the operation of religious radio stations in accordance with the same rules that apply to commercial and state-run stations. Stations must show that their workers are employed full-time, that ARTEL has been paid for the use of assigned frequencies, and that employee social security taxes and intellectual property fees have been paid. There are no special tax preferences granted to religious organizations operating print or broadcast media.

There are 14 radio stations operated by religious groups, of which 5 are run by the Catholic Church and 4 are run by Protestant denominations. Five of the stations were created before the CSI was established in 1995. All 14 have signed agreements with the CSI, which means that they have complied successfully with the regulations governing the operation of all radio stations in the country, including those that are commercial and state-run. There is one religious television station operated by a Protestant denomination in Ouagadougou. It broadcasts for 5 hours in the evening in both French and the local language, More. Muslim groups, the Catholic Church, and Protestant denominations publish periodicals.

The Government has established the following religious holidays as national holidays: Eid Al-Adha, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, Mouloud, Assumption Day, All Saints' Day, Ramadan, and Christmas Day. There is no evidence that these holidays have a negative effect on any religious groups.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations among the various religious communities are amicable. Religious tolerance is widespread, and members of the same family often practice different religions.

There have been no significant ecumenical movements. Muslim, Christian, and traditional religious leaders played a prominent role in the National Day of Forgiveness in 2000, a government-organized event to atone for past state-sponsored political and economic crimes.

There were no reports of religious conflict or ritual murders during the period covered by this report; however, there were allegations of witchcraft. The Ministry of Social Action and the Family maintains a shelter in Ouagadougou for women forced to flee their villages because they were suspected of being sorceresses.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses issues of religious freedom with the Government in context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The Embassy also maintains contacts with leaders of all major organized religious denominations and groups in the country.

BURUNDI

The Transitional Constitutional Act provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of religious freedom during the period covered by the report. While in general government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion, the Government arrested the leader of an indigenous religious group for security reasons.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 10,745 square miles and its population is approximately 6.2 million. Although reliable statistics on the number of followers of various religions are not available, a Roman Catholic official estimated that 60 percent of the population are Catholic, with the largest concentration of adherents located in the center and south of the country. A Muslim leader estimated that up to 10 percent of the population are Muslim, mostly in urban areas. The remainder of the population belongs to other Christian churches, practices traditional indigenous religions, or has no religious affiliation. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of small indigenous groups not affiliated with any major religion, some of which have won adherents by promising miracle cures for HIV/AIDS and other ailments. Many citizens regularly attend religious services.

Foreign missionary groups of many faiths are active in the country, including Bahá'is, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Quakers (Friends Church), and Seventh-Day Adventists.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Transitional Constitutional Act provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. There is no state religion; however, the Catholic Church, which represents approximately 60 percent of the population, is predominant.

The Government requires religious groups to register with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which keeps track of their leadership and activities. The Government requires that religious groups maintain a headquarters in the country. While there is no law that accords tax exemptions to religious groups, the Government often waives taxes on imported religious articles used by churches and also often waives taxes on the importation by churches of goods destined for social development purposes. These exemptions are negotiated with the Finance Ministry on a case-by-case basis, and there is no indication of religious bias in the awarding of such exemptions.

The heads of major religious organizations are accorded diplomatic status. Foreign missionary groups openly promote their religious beliefs. The Government has welcomed their development assistance.

The Government recognizes religious holidays that primarily are Catholic, including Assumption, Ascension, and All Saint's Day, as well as Christmas.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In general government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

On October 3, 2000, soldiers shot and killed Antonio Bargiggia, a Catholic brother from Italy, who ran a hospital in Mutoyi. On October 19, a soldier, Napoleon Manirakiza, was convicted of killing Bargiggia and was executed for murder without having had legal representation during his trial or a chance to appeal his conviction.

In April 2001, the Government arrested the leader of an indigenous religious group and closed down his church after the leader's claims to divinity led to repeated clashes with a rival leader's adherents. The Government claimed to be motivated by concern for public order rather than religious bias. The leader's trial was pending at the end of the period covered by this report. There were no other cases of clergy being arrested or churches closed for religious reasons.

On June 9, 2001, FDD rebels killed Anglican archdeacon Jodl Beheda and two other persons in an ambush on their van near Makamba. On June 11, 2001, rebels killed one nun in an ambush on a vehicle in the area of Mutambara belonging to the Roman Catholic bishop of Bururi.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

In their practice of religion, citizens generally tolerate other religions. Disputes between religious groups are rare, apart from minor disagreements over competition for followers.

In October 2000, there were reports that unidentified attackers killed an Italian nun in Gitega. Observers believe that the attack was criminal, not political in nature. No person had been arrested by the end of the period covered by this report.

Catholic Bishops drew up a joint message calling for dialog and compromise to end conflict, and the message was read in Catholic churches throughout the country.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Embassy officials also maintain regular contact with leaders and members of the various religious communities.

CAMEROON

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there were some exceptions.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. Religious sites and personnel, at times, were subjected to abuses by government security forces.

Relations among different religious groups generally are amicable; however, some religious groups face societal pressure and discrimination within their regions, although this may reflect ethnic as much as religious differences.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 183,568 square miles and its population is 15,421,937. Muslim centers and Christian churches of various denominations operate freely throughout the country. Approximately 40 percent of the population at

least nominally are Christian, about 20 percent at least nominally are Muslim, and about 40 percent practice traditional indigenous religions or no religion. Approximately half of Christians are Catholics and approximately half are affiliated with Protestant denominations. Christians are concentrated chiefly in the southern and western provinces. The two Anglophone provinces of the western region largely are Protestant; and the Francophone provinces of the southern and western regions largely are Catholic. Muslims are concentrated mainly in the northern provinces, where the locally dominant Fulani (or Peuhl) ethnic group overwhelmingly is Muslim, and other ethnic groups, known collectively as the Kirdi, generally are partly Islamicized. The Bamoun ethnic group of the western provinces also largely is Muslim. Traditional indigenous religions are practiced in rural areas throughout the country but rarely are practiced publicly in cities, in part because many such religions are intrinsically local in character.

Religious missionaries are present throughout the country, including Catholic, Muslim, Baha'i, Baptist, Presbyterian, Evangelic, and the New Church of God.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there were some exceptions. There is no state religion.

In general the Law on Religious Congregations governs relations between the State and religious groups. Religious groups must be approved and registered with the Ministry of Territorial Administration in order to function legally; there were no reports that the Government refused to register any group. It is illegal for a religious group to operate without official recognition, but the law prescribes no specific penalties for doing so. Although official recognition confers no general tax benefits, it does allow religious groups to receive real estate as gifts and legacies for the conduct of their activities. In order to register, a religious denomination must fulfill the legal requirement to qualify as a religious congregation. This definition includes "any group of natural persons or corporate bodies whose vocation is divine worship" or "any group of persons living in community in accordance with a religious doctrine." The denomination then submits a file to the Minister of Territorial Administration. The file must include a request for authorization, a copy of the charter of the group that describes planned activities, and the names and respective functions of the officials of the group. The Minister studies the file and sends it to the presidency with a recommendation for a positive or negative decision. The President generally follows the recommendation of the Minister, and authorization is granted by a presidential decree. The approval process usually takes several years, due primarily to administrative delays. The only religious groups known to be registered are Christian and Muslim groups and the Baha'i Faith, but other groups may be registered. The Ministry has not disclosed the number of registered denominations, but the number of registered religious groups is estimated to be in the dozens. The Government does not register traditional religious groups on the grounds that the practice of traditional religions is not public but rather private to members of a particular ethnic or kinship group, or to the residents of a particular locality.

Disputes within registered religious groups about control of places of worship, schools, real estate, or financial assets are resolved in the first instance by the executive branch rather than by the judiciary.

Religious missionary groups are present in the country and operate without impediment.

Several religious denominations operate diverse private schools. Although post-secondary education continues to be dominated by state institutions, private schools affiliated with religious denominations, including Catholic, Protestant, and Koranic schools, have been among the country's best schools at the primary and secondary levels for many years. The Ministry of Education is charged by law with ensuring that private schools run by religious groups meet the same standards as state-operated schools in terms of curriculum, building quality, and teacher training. For schools affiliated with religious groups, this oversight function is performed by the Sub-Department of Confessional Education of the Ministry's Department of Private Education.

A private radio station, founded by a Catholic priest but not affiliated with the Catholic Church, continues to broadcast in Yaounde while its official authorization remains pending. The Catholic Church also operates one of the country's few modern private printing presses, and a weekly newspaper, "L'Effort Camerounais," which until the 1990's was one of the only private newspapers in the country.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In the past, government officials criticized and questioned any criticisms of the Government by religious institutions and leaders (see Section III); however, there were no such reports during the period covered by this report.

On April 24, 2000, the Ministry of National Education announced the suspension of two teachers of the Bertoua technical high school. The two teachers were accused of having “enticed” some of their students into their religious group.

The practice of witchcraft is a criminal offense under the national penal code; however, persons generally are prosecuted for this offense only in conjunction with some other offense, such as murder. Witchcraft traditionally has been a common explanation for diseases of which the causes were unknown.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

In the past, the sites and personnel of religious institutions were not exempt from the widespread human rights abuses committed by government security forces. On April 20, 2000, government security forces reportedly stormed Notre Dame de Sept Douleurs parish in Douala during the ceremony of Mass. Security forces reportedly arrested some parishioners and beat others. There have been no reports of government action taken in response to this incident, and there were no reports of such incidents during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government’s refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations among different religious groups generally are amicable; however, some religious groups face societal pressures within their regions. In the northern provinces, especially in rural areas, societal discrimination by Muslims against persons who practice traditional indigenous religions is strong and widespread, and some Christians in rural areas of the north complain of discrimination by Muslims. However, no specific incidents or violence stemming from religious discrimination were reported, and the reported discrimination may reflect ethnic as much as religious differences. The northern region suffers from ethnic tensions between the Fulani, a Muslim group that conquered most of the region 200 years ago, and the Kirdi, the descendants of groups that practiced traditional indigenous religions and whom the Fulani conquered or displaced, justifying their conquest on religious grounds. Although some Kirdi subsequently have adopted Islam, the Kirdi remain socially, educationally, and economically disadvantaged relative to the Fulani in the three northern provinces. The slavery still practiced in parts of the north is reported to be largely enslavement of Kirdi by Fulani.

On June 16, 2001, Cardinal Tumi, The Catholic Archbishop of Douala, sent a letter to the Government strongly criticizing summary executions, torture, and other human rights abuses by the Douala Operational Command. The Government did not respond, either publicly or privately, by the end of the period covered by this report (see Section II).

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The Embassy maintained regular contact with religious groups in the country and monitored religious freedom.

CAPE VERDE

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country, which consists of nine inhabited islands, has a total land area of 1,557 square miles and is situated in the Atlantic Ocean some 280 miles from the most westerly point of the African mainland. The population is estimated at 480,000. The overwhelming majority (over 90 percent) of the population are at least nominally Roman Catholic. The largest Protestant denomination is the Church of the Nazarene. Other Christian churches include the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Assembly of God, and various other Pentecostal and evangelical groups. There are also small Muslim and Baha'i communities. There is no information available regarding the number of atheists in the country.

There is no association between religious differences and ethnic or political affiliations; however, it generally is understood that the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the country is sympathetic to the Movement for Democracy (MPD) party, which formerly ruled the country. While many Catholics once were hostile toward the Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV), which became the governing party in 2001, they have become supporters of the PAICV due to conflict within the MPD party and dissatisfaction over the MPD's performance.

There are some foreign missionary groups operating in the country, including evangelical groups from Brazil.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. The Constitution also provides for the separation of church and state and prohibits the State from imposing any religious beliefs and practices. There is no state religion.

To be recognized as legal entities by the Government, religious groups (as well as other organized groups of citizens) must register with the Ministry of Justice; however, failure to do so does not result in any restriction on religious belief or practice.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

It generally is recognized that the Catholic majority enjoys a privileged status in national life. For example, the Government provides the Catholic Church with free television broadcast time for religious services and observes its holy days as official holidays.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are generally amicable relations between the various religious communities.

More than 20 cases involving the desecration of Catholic churches have been reported to the police over the years. While some cases date from 1975, after 1990 the rate of incidence increased; however, in contrast to previous years, there were no incidents during the period covered by this report. The persons responsible for the desecrations never were identified, and the topic has remained a controversial electoral issue since the MPD accused supporters of the main opposition party PAICV of involvement in the crimes; however, the courts have dismissed every formal accusation that has been brought against PAICV members, usually for lack of evidence. In August 1999, the Attorney General rejected a local prosecutor's dismissal of the case against the four individuals of the "S. Domingos Group," who were accused of desecrating a Catholic church in 1996, and no further action was taken during the period covered by this report.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion but establishes fixed legal conditions and prohibits what the Government considers religious fundamentalism or intolerance. The constitutional provision prohibiting religious fundamentalism is understood widely to be aimed at Muslims. In practice the Government permits adherents of all religions to worship without interference.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report.

Generally there are amicable relations between the various religious communities; however, there have been occasional reports that villagers believed to be witches were harassed, beaten, or sometimes killed by neighbors.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has an area of approximately 242,000 square miles and a population of approximately 3.5 million, of which an estimated 690,000 persons live in the capital, Bangui. The population is believed to be about 50 percent Christian, 15 percent Muslim, and 35 percent practitioners of traditional indigenous religions or nonreligious. Most Christians also practice some aspects of traditional indigenous religions. The Government does not keep data on the number of nontraditional religious groups in the country, and there is no data available on active participation in formal religious services or rituals.

In general immigrants and foreign nationals in the country who practice a particular religion characterize themselves as Catholic, Protestant, or Muslim.

There are many missionary groups operating in the country, such as the Lutherans, Grace Brethren, and Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as missionaries from Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and other African countries.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion but establishes fixed legal conditions and prohibits what the Government considers religious fundamentalism or intolerance. The constitutional provision prohibiting religious fundamentalism is understood widely to be aimed at Muslims. In practice the Government permits adherents of all religions to worship without interference. There is no indication that the Government favors any particular religion, and there is no state religion.

Religious groups (except for traditional indigenous religious groups) are required by law to register with the Ministry of Interior. This registration is free and confers official recognition and certain limited benefits, such as customs duty exemption for the importation of vehicles or equipment, but does not confer a general tax exemption. The administrative police of the Ministry of Interior keep track of groups that have failed to register; however, the police have not attempted to impose any penalty on such groups.

Religious organizations and missionary groups are free to proselytize, worship, and construct places of worship.

Although the Government does not prohibit explicitly religious instruction in public schools, religious instruction is not a part of the overall public school curriculum. There are approximately 12 Catholic schools in Bangui.

Religious holidays celebrated as national holidays include Christmas, Easter Monday, Ascension Day, the Monday after Pentecost, and All Saints Day.

The Government has taken positive steps to promote interfaith dialog, including organizing interfaith Masses to promote peace (see Section III).

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Any religious or nonreligious group that the Government considers subversive is subject to sanctions. The Ministry of Interior may decline to register, suspend the operations of, or ban any organization that it deems offensive to public morals or likely to disturb the peace. The Ministry of Interior also may intervene to resolve

internal conflicts about property, finances, or leadership within religious groups. The Government has banned the Unification Church since the mid-1980's as a subversive organization likely to disturb the peace, specifically in connection with alleged paramilitary training of young church members. However, the Government imposed no new sanctions on any religious group during the period covered by this report.

Unlike in previous years, there were no reports of Mbororo (also known as Peulh or Fulani) Muslim herders being singled out for harassment by the authorities, including extortion by police, due to popular resentment of their presumed affluence. Muslims play a preponderant role in the economy.

The practice of witchcraft is a criminal offense under the Penal Code; however, persons generally are prosecuted for this offense only in conjunction with some other offense, such as murder. Witchcraft traditionally has been a common explanation for diseases of which the causes were unknown. Although many traditional indigenous religions include or accommodate belief in the efficacy of witchcraft, they generally approve of harmful witchcraft only for defensive or retaliatory purposes and purport to offer protection against it. The practice of witchcraft is understood widely to encompass attempts to harm others not only by magic, but also by covert means of established efficacy such as poisons.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

There were reports of Muslim Chadian commercial traders being attacked in a commercial section near the center of Bangui. Although these attacks are commercially motivated, they seem to be aggravated and tolerated because the Chadians are Muslims. On one occasion, a Chadian was attacked in the presence of the Interior Minister. It is unclear if the attack was perpetrated by police or private citizens.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Although in general there is religious tolerance among members of different religious groups, there have been occasional reports that some villagers who were believed to be witches were harassed, beaten, or sometimes killed by neighbors. Courts have tried, convicted, and sentenced some persons for crimes of violence against suspected witches. There were no reported mob killings of persons suspected of practicing witchcraft during the period covered by this report.

Unlike in previous years, during the period covered by this report, there were no reports that organized armed highway bandits attacked religious groups, particularly Catholic priests and nuns, northeast of Bangui.

When serious social or political conflicts have arisen, simultaneous prayer ceremonies have been held in churches, temples, and mosques to ask for divine assistance. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace often conducts developmental and educational programs and seminars throughout the country. The members work closely with other church groups and social organizations on social issues. On February 24, 2001, thousands of worshipers of different religious faiths took part in a Mass at the national stadium that was dedicated to peace in the country. President Ange Felix Patasse, who organized the Mass in the wake of widespread strikes by civil servants demanding payment of salary arrears, urged the congregation of Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims not to allow the strike to affect peace adversely.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The Embassy maintains contact with religious groups, especially American missionaries in the country, and monitors human rights developments.

CHAD

The Constitution provides for religious freedom; at times the Government limited this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. The Government has arrested and sanctioned some Islamic imams. The Government has banned the Islamic religious group Faydel Djaria and arrested and detained some of its members.

Generally there are amicable relations between the various religious communities. There were no indications of increasing tension between Christians and Muslims due to the proselytizing by evangelical Christians during the period covered by this report.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 495,755 square miles and its population is 7,612,950. Of the total population, 54 percent are Muslim, approximately one-third are Christian, and the remainder practice traditional indigenous religions or no religion at all. Most northerners practice Islam and most southerners practice Christianity or a traditional indigenous religion; however, population patterns are becoming more complex, especially in urban areas. Many citizens, despite stated religious affiliation, do not practice their religion regularly.

The vast majority of Muslims practice a moderate form of Islam known locally as Tidjani, which originated in 1727 under Sheik Ahmat Tidjani in what is now Morocco and Algeria. Tidjani Islam, as practiced in the country, incorporates some local African religious elements. A small minority of the country's Muslims (5 to 10 percent) are considered fundamentalist.

Roman Catholics make up the largest Christian denomination in the country; most Protestants are affiliated with various evangelical Christian groups.

Adherents of two other religions, the Baha'i Faith and Jehovah's Witnesses, also are present in the country. Both faiths were introduced after independence in 1960 and therefore are considered to be "new" religions. Because of their relatively recent origin and their affiliation with foreign practitioners, both are perceived as foreign.

There are foreign missionaries representing both Christian and Islamic groups. Itinerant Muslim imams also visit, primarily from Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for religious freedom, and the Government limited this right in practice. The Constitution also provides that the country shall be a secular state; however, despite the secular nature of the State, a large proportion of senior government officials are Muslims, and some policies favor Islam in practice. For example, the Government sponsors annual Hajj trips to Mecca for certain government officials.

The Government requires religious groups, including both foreign missionary groups and domestic religious groups, to register with the Ministry of the Interior's Department for Religious Affairs. Registration confers official recognition but does not confer any tax preferences or other benefits. There are no specific legal penalties for failure to register, and there were no reports that any group had failed to apply for registration or that the registration process is unduly burdensome. In the past, the Government reportedly has denied official recognition to some groups of Arab Muslims in Ati, near the eastern border with Sudan, on the grounds that they have incorporated elements of traditional African religion, such as dancing and singing, into their worship; however, there were no such reports during the period covered by this report.

On May 31, 2000, the Supreme Court rejected a request from one branch of a Christian evangelical church to deny government recognition to its independent sister branch. In 1998 the Eglise Evangelique des Freres (EEF) split into moderate and fundamentalist groups. The moderate branch of the EEF retained the legal registration for the Church, but on April 7, 1999, the Ministry of Interior awarded recognition to the fundamentalist branch under a new name Eglise des Freres Independentes au Tchad (EFIT). Since 1999 the EEF branch has sought to bar the EFIT church legally from practice, and ultimately the case went before the Supreme Court, which upheld the rights of the EFIT to continue its religious work and its right to function.

In 2000 representatives of civil society and religious leaders met under the Ministry of Social Affairs' auspices to develop a new Family Code; however, the working group was not able to resolve certain differences between religious groups and no

further action was taken on the draft Family Code during the period covered by this report.

Foreign missionaries do not face restrictions but must register and receive authorization from the Ministry of Interior. There were no reports that authorization was withheld from any group. Catholic and Protestant missionaries proselytize in the country.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In January 1998, the Minister of Interior banned the Islamic religious group Faydal Djaria. The group arrived in the country from Nigeria and Senegal, and incorporates singing and dancing into its religious ceremonies and activities. Male and female members of the group freely interact with one another during religious gatherings. The group is found from the Kanem region around Lake Chad into neighboring Chari Baguirmi. The Chadian Superior Council of Islamic Affairs considers that the Faydal Djaria group does not conform to Islamic tenets. Early in 2000, the group increasingly became active, resulting in a number of arrests in the Kanem. The new Director of Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Interior has requested that the Superior Council of Islamic Affairs provide the specific sections of the Koran that support the ban of the group.

According to a Protestant pastor in N'Djamena, while differing faiths or denominations are treated equally by the Government, Islamic congregations appear to have an easier time obtaining official permission for their activities. Non-Islamic religious leaders also claim that Islamic officials and organizations receive greater tax exemptions and unofficial financial support from the Government. State lands reportedly are accorded to Islamic leaders for the purpose of building mosques, while other religious denominations must purchase land at market rates to build churches. However, during the period covered by this report, at least one Christian congregation was able to reclaim a former building that was being used by a Muslim congregation, because the Government found that the Christian Church had a stronger legal claim to the building.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

There is an undetermined number of followers of Faydal Djaria, the banned Islamic group, who are prisoners in Kanem. On May 25, 2000, the Sultan of Kanem arrested a number of adherents of the group Faydal Djaria. In addition the Chadian Superior Council of Islamic Affairs, which believes that the group does not conform to Islamic tenets, requested that the Ministry of Interior arrest the group's spiritual leader, Ahmat Abdallah.

Within the Islamic community, the Government has imprisoned and sanctioned fundamentalist Islamic imams believed to be promoting conflict among Muslims. A fundamentalist imam in N'Djamena, Sheikh Faki Suzuki was restricted from preaching Islam for 6 months, from October 1998 to March 1999, and the authorities also placed him under house arrest on the grounds that he was inciting religious violence. However, Suzuki was no longer under house arrest, he was not restricted from preaching Islam, and did not experience problems with the Islamic Committee during the period covered by this report.

In January 1999, the Government arbitrarily arrested and detained imam Sheikh Mahamat Marouf, the fundamentalist Islamic leader of the northeastern town of Abeche, and refused to allow his followers to meet and pray openly in their mosque. The Government claims that Marouf was responsible for inciting religious violence although Marouf's followers reject the Government's claim and cite religious differences with the Government. Sheik Marouf was released from prison in November 1999 after nearly 1 year in jail. Sheikh Marouf may pray but is not permitted to lead prayers. His followers are allowed to pray in their mosques, but are forbidden from debating religious beliefs in any way that might be considered proselytizing; however, the Tidjani followers are allowed to proselytize.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Former Islamic adherents who have converted are shunned by their families and sometimes beaten; however, there were no reported incidents of beatings during the period covered by this report.

Most interfaith dialog happens on an individual level and not through the intervention of the Government. The different religious communities generally coexist

without problems. Unlike in past years, government and church officials reported that there was no conflict between Christian denominations, including Protestant denominations, during the period covered by this report.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

COMOROS

The Constitution does not provide for freedom of religion specifically and does not prohibit discrimination based on religion or religious belief specifically, and authorities infringed on freedom of religion.

There was no change in the status of what is at times limited respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. An overwhelming majority of the population is Sunni Muslim, and government authorities and the local population restricted the right of Christians to practice their faith. Police regularly threatened and sometimes detained practicing Christians. Usually the authorities held those detained for a few days and often attempted to convert them forcibly to Islam.

There is widespread societal discrimination against Christians.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 838 square miles and its population is approximately 578,400. An overwhelming majority—almost 99 percent—of the population are Sunni Muslim. Fewer than 300 persons—less than 1 percent of the population—are Christian; all of whom reportedly converted to Christianity within the last 6 years. There is a very small population (less than five families) of Indian descent, of which two or three families are Hindu. There are no atheists in the country.

A few foreign missionaries of Christian faith practice in the country.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution, which was promulgated in May 2000 by the head of the military after the April 1999 coup, provides that the National Army of Development upholds individual and collective liberties; however, it does not provide for freedom of religion specifically, and authorities infringed on freedom of religion. The Government discouraged the practice of religions other than Islam. The Ulama council, which had advised the President, Prime Minister, President of the Federal Assembly, the Council of Isles, and the island governors on whether bills, ordinances, decrees, and laws are in conformity with the principles of Islam, no longer exists. The Constitution written by the separatist leadership of the island of Anjouan provides for freedom of religion; however, in the past, the separatist leadership has discouraged the practice of religions other than Islam. Civil authorities on Anjouan appear to have refrained from discouraging religions other than Islam during the period covered by this report, possibly because they were focused on political efforts to reunify the country. The Fombani Declaration that was signed by Azali and the Anjouan separatist leader in August 2000 included an agreement to make Islam the national religion; however, there were no reports of official discrimination or other abuse initiated by civil authorities during the period covered by this report.

The February 17, 2001, "Framework Accord for Reconciliation in the Comoros" created a commission that is tasked with developing a new Constitution by June 2001; however, the new Constitution had not been created by the end of the period covered by this report.

There is Islamic instruction in public schools for students at the middle school level that is taught in conjunction with Arabic instruction. Almost all children between 4 and 7 years of age go to Koranic schools outside of normal school hours in order to learn to read the Koran.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government discouraged the practice of religions other than Islam. Christians, in particular, faced restrictions on their ability to practice their faith. The Government continued to restrict the use of the country's three churches to nonciti-

zens. There are two Roman Catholic churches, one in Moroni on the island of Grande Comore and one in Mutsamudu on the island of Anjouan. There is one Protestant church in Moroni. Many Christians practice their faith in private residences. Foreign missionaries work in local hospitals and schools, but they are not allowed to proselytize.

Local authorities and religious leaders continued to harass Christians on Anjouan. In the past, some community authorities on Anjouan have banned Christians from attending any community events and banned Christian burials in a local cemetery, but there were no reports of such incidents during the period covered by this report.

Bans on alcohol and immodest dress are enforced sporadically, usually during religious months, such as Ramadan. Alcohol can be imported and sold with a permit from the Government.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

On October 13, 2000, during protests in Moroni, there were reports that police arrested persons inside a mosque while they were praying; all of those arrested in connection with the protests were released without charge after 24 hours.

Police regularly threatened and sometimes detained practicing Christians. The Government has arrested and convicted individuals with Christian affiliations on charges of "anti-Islamic activity." In the past, local government officials attempted to force Christians to attend services at mosques against their will; however, there were no reports of such incidents during the period covered by this report (see Section III).

In the past, there have been accounts of police and quasi-police authorities, known as embargoes, arresting, beating, and detaining Christians on the island of Anjouan. One Anjouanais Christian estimated that approximately 50 Christians, both men and women, were detained and released several days later by the embargoes in an 18-month period between 1999 and 2000. There were no reports of Christians being detained on Anjouan at the end of the period covered by this report.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There is widespread societal discrimination against Christians in all sectors of life. Christians face insults and threats of violence from members of their communities. Christians have been harassed by mobs in front of mosques and called in for questioning by religious authorities. In April 2001, in Domoni on Anjouan, one of the local Christian leaders was summoned before local Islamic leaders and threatened. The Christian leader's father was forced to pay a fine, and the leader's family had to leave Domoni for a month. Several times in the first half of 2001, religious leaders on Anjouan and Grande Comore have made threats against Christians during radio broadcasts. In December 2000, also in Domini, community members set fire to the house of a Christian man while he was sleeping inside; the man escaped.

Attempts have been made to isolate Christians from village life. In September and October 1999, on Anjouan, a religious leader started an unofficial campaign against Christians. Committees were formed in many villages to harass Christians, and lists of names of suspected Christians were circulated; however, there were no reports during the period covered by this report that the committees were active or that the lists were used to harass Christians.

In some instances, families have forced Christian family members out of their homes or threatened them with a loss of financial support. Some Christians have had their Bibles taken by family members. In the past, local government officials, religious authorities, and family members attempted to force Christians to attend services at mosques against their will (see Section II); however, there were no reports of such incidents during the period covered by this report.

Islamic fundamentalism is growing in popularity as more students return to the country after studying Islamic subjects in foreign countries.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Although there is no constitution currently in effect, the Government generally respects freedom of religion in practice, provided that worshipers neither disturb public order nor contradict commonly held morals; however, government forces committed some abuses.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom in government-controlled areas during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion. However, in areas of the country under the military occupation of Rwanda and the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) rebel group, respect for religious freedom continued to be poor. Credible reports indicate that RCD and Rwandan troops deliberately targeted churches in their general attacks on towns and villages. Between February and September 2000, RCD rebels and Rwandan authorities also exiled the Archbishop of Bukavu, whom they suspected of inciting resistance; however, these actions apparently resulted largely from political rather than religious motives. Although there have been reports that some Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) troops may have targeted Catholic clergy, subsequent reports indicate that UPDF troops were not involved in such incidents.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 1,456,500 square miles, and its population is approximately 52 million. Approximately 50 percent of the population are Roman Catholic, 20 percent are Protestant, and 10 percent are Muslim. The remainder largely practice traditional indigenous religions. There are no statistics available on the percentage of atheists. Minority religious groups include, among others, Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons).

Foreign missionaries operate within the country.

There are no reliable data on active participation in religious services. Ethnic and political differences generally are not linked to religious differences.

SECTION II. STATUS OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Legal/Policy Framework

Although there is no constitution currently in effect, the Government generally respects freedom of religion in practice, provided that worshipers neither disturb public order nor contradict commonly held morals; however, government forces committed some abuses. There is no state religion.

The establishment and operation of religious institutions is provided for and regulated through a statutory order on the Regulation of Non-profit Associations and Public Utility Institutions. Requirements for the establishment of a religious organization are simple and generally are not subject to abuse. Exemption from taxation is among the benefits granted to religious organizations. A 1971 law regulating religious organizations grants civil servants the power to recognize, suspend recognition of, or dissolve religious groups. There have been no reports that the Government suspended or dissolved a religious group since 1990, when the Government suspended its recognition of the Jehovah's Witnesses; that suspension subsequently was reversed by a court. Although this law restricts the process of recognition, officially recognized religions are free to establish places of worship and to train clergy.

The Government requires practicing religious to be registered; however, in practice unregistered religious groups operate unhindered.

Although the Government requires foreign religious groups to obtain the approval of the President through the Minister of Justice, foreign religious groups generally operate without restriction once they receive approval from the Government. Many recognized churches have external ties, and foreign missionaries generally are allowed to proselytize. The Government generally did not interfere with foreign missionaries.

The Government promoted interfaith understanding by supporting and consulting with the country's five major churches (Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Orthodox, and Kimbanguist). President Joseph Kabila announced the liberalization of political party activities, a significant political reform, to the Consortium of Traditional Religious Leaders at the Kimbanguist Center. The Consortium of Traditional Religious Leaders serves as a forum for religious leaders to gather and discuss issues of con-

cern, and it advises and counsels the Government while presenting a common moral and religious front.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In January 1999, former President Laurent Kabila promulgated a decree that restricts the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), including religious organizations, by establishing requirements for them; however, existing religious organizations were exempt, and the decree subsequently was not enforced.

In July 1999, the Government issued an order prohibiting private radio stations from transmitting foreign radio broadcasts, which stopped broadcasts by a Catholic radio station in Kinshasa and a number of secular radio stations; however, the Minister of Communication retracted the order in September 1999. There have been no further government attempts to restrict religious broadcasts. Catholic radio stations did not broadcast foreign radio transmissions during the period covered by this report.

While the Government generally did not interfere with foreign missionaries, foreign missionaries have not been exempt from general restrictions by security forces, such as restrictions on freedom of movement imposed on all persons by security force members who erect and man roadblocks where they solicit bribes.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

While the Government is tolerant in matters of religion, some abuses occurred in government-controlled areas as a result of the war. These abuses, usually the ransacking of churches and the pilfering of church property, generally were the result of a lack of discipline among government troops.

On December 28, 2000, the military intelligence unit DEMIAP arrested Cyrien Mbuka, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Boma, in Bas-Congo Province, allegedly on charges of engaging in subversive actions. It is believed that his arrest was due to conflicts within the parish. On January 9, 2001, Cardinal Frederic Etsou issued a press release in which he protested Bishop Mbuka's arrest and that of other bishops during 2000. Mbuka was released on January 10, 2001.

In September 2000, Catherine Nzuzi, president of the major faction of the Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution (MPR) party, organized a Mass in memory of former President Mobutu. Although she previously was arrested in September 1999 after she organized a Mass for the deceased leader, the Government allowed the 2000 Mass to occur without incident.

Following the October 2000 death in Rome of Emmanuel Kataliko, the Archbishop of Bukavu, the Catholic Church announced that he had died of a heart attack; however, the Government of Laurent Kabila claimed that Tutsis had poisoned the Archbishop. These reports, which were picked up quickly by the newspapers and radio, particularly those in the rebel territories, incited the populace and contributed to demonstrations in the city of Bukavu in October. Rebel gunfire reportedly killed a child during the demonstrations; other sources reported that four people were killed.

War broke out in 1998 between the Government and rebel forces; by the end of the period covered by this report, rebel forces backed by Rwanda and Uganda continued to control more than half of the country. The Government exercises little authority in areas east of the disengagement line. In areas of the country under the military occupation of Rwanda, and their respective rebel clients, respect for religious freedom continued to be poor. RCD rebels and their Rwandan allies committed significant abuses in these areas. Credible reports indicate that RCD and Rwandan troops deliberately targeted Catholic churches as a means of both intimidating the local population and in retaliation for the Church's perceived role in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Abuses reportedly took the form of attacks on missions, killings of priests, the rape of nuns, and the burning of churches. Although there have been reports that some Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) troops may have targeted Catholic clergy, subsequent reports indicate that UPDF troops were not involved in such incidents.

Between February and September 2000, RCD rebels and Rwandan authorities kept Archbishop Kataliko of Bukavu in exile in the Kivu provinces because they suspected him of condoning resistance to the rebellion. These authorities only allowed the Archbishop's return to Bukavu on September 14 following significant U.S. and international pressure. The Archbishop died of a heart attack the following month while in Rome.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom. However, in late June 2001, in Orientale Province, there were reports of witch hunts, which resulted in the killing of several hundred persons. The local population targeted the victims because they suspected and feared that they were casting spells on others. There is a common belief in the region that some persons have the power to cast spells on others; this fear sometimes rises to mass hysteria.

Leaders of major religions consult one another through the Consortium of Traditional Religious Leaders.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of the promoting human rights.

The U.S. Government criticized the forced internal exile of the Archbishop of Bukavu, in both private discussions and public statements. On numerous occasions, the U.S. Government also voiced its opposition to the presence of hostile foreign troops in the country. The U.S. Government also publicly criticized the war and launched a number of diplomatic initiatives, in concert with the U.N., to bring the conflict to an end.

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Fundamental Act provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

While the generally amicable relations among religions in society contributed to religious freedom, the close link between certain messianic groups and opposition political movements at times was a source of tension.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 132,047 square miles and its population is approximately 3 million. Approximately half of its citizens are Christian; of these about 90 percent are Roman Catholic. There is a small Muslim community estimated at 25,000 to 50,000 persons, most of whom are immigrants from North and West Africa who work in commerce in urban centers. The remainder of the population is made up of practitioners of traditional indigenous religions, those who belong to various messianic groups, and those who practice no religion at all. A small minority of the Christian community practices Kimbanguism, a syncretist movement that originated in the neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo. While retaining many elements of Christianity, Kimbanguism also recognizes its founder (Simon Kimbangu) as a prophet and incorporates African traditional beliefs, such as ancestor worship.

Mystical or messianic practices (especially among the ethnic Lari population in the Pool region) have been associated with opposition political movements, including some elements of the armed insurrection in the south during 1998–1999.

It is unknown if foreign missionary groups operate in the country.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution (Fundamental Act) provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no official state religion.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

While the generally amicable relations among religions in society contributed to religious freedom, the close link between certain messianic groups and opposition political movements at times was a source of tension.

All organized religious groups are represented in a joint ecumenical council, which meets periodically.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

COTE D'IVOIRE

The new Constitution, which was approved by referendum in July 2000 and implemented on August 4, 2000, provides for freedom of religion; however, the Government at times limited this right in practice.

The status of respect for religious freedom deteriorated somewhat during the period covered by this report. In October and December 2000, violent clashes between security forces, Republican Rally (RDR) militants, and Ivoirian Popular Front (FPI) supporters, led to the deaths of hundreds of persons, most of whom were Muslims. During the period covered by this report, the security forces detained, questioned, and, on at least one occasion, beat Muslims. The Government monitors minority religions for signs of political activity it considers subversive or dangerous. Some Muslims believe that their religious and ethnic affiliation make them targets of discrimination by the Government with regard to both employment and the renewal of national identity cards.

Relations between the various religious communities generally are amicable; however, there is some societal discrimination against Muslims and followers of traditional indigenous religions.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 122,780 square miles, and its population is 15,366,692. The published results of the most recent national census, conducted in 1998, indicated that Muslims make up about 38.6 percent of the country's population; Catholics make up 19.4 percent; practitioners of traditional indigenous religions, 11.9 percent; Protestants, 6.6 percent; Harrists, 1.3 percent; other Christians, 3.1 percent; practitioners of other religions, 1.7 percent; and persons without religious preference or affiliation, 16.7 percent. Among citizens, 27.4 percent are Muslim, 20.8 percent are Catholic, 15.4 percent practice traditional indigenous religions, 8.2 percent are Protestant, 1.6 percent are Harrist, 3.4 percent are of other Christian affiliations, 1.9 percent practice other religions, and 20.7 percent are without religious affiliation. Foreigners living in the country are 70.5 percent Muslim and 15.4 percent Catholic with small percentages practicing other religions.

Muslims are found in the greatest numbers in the northern half of the country, though they also are becoming increasingly numerous in the cities of the south due to immigration. In 1998 Muslims composed 45.5 percent of the total urban population and 33.5 percent of the total rural population. Catholics are found mostly in the southern, central, and eastern portions of the country. Practitioners of traditional indigenous religions are concentrated in rural areas of the country's north, west, center, and east. Protestants are concentrated in the central, eastern, and southwest regions. Members of the Harrist Church, an African Protestant denomination founded in the country in 1913 by a Liberian preacher named William Wade Harris, are concentrated in the south.

Political and religious affiliations tend to follow ethnic lines. As population growth and movement have accentuated ethnic distinctions between the groups of the Sahel and those of the forest zone, those distinctions have been expressed sometimes in

terms of religion (e.g., northern Muslims and southern Christians and traditionalists).

Religious groups in the country include the Adventist Church, the Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptist Church, Bossonism (the traditional religious practices of the Akan ethnic group), the Autonomous Church of Celestial Christianity of Oschoffa, Islam, Roman Catholicism, the Union of the Evangelical Church of Services and Works of Cote d'Ivoire, the Harrist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), the Protestant Methodist Church of Cote d'Ivoire, the Yoruba First Church, the Church of God International Missions, the Baptist Church Missions, the Church of the Prophet Papa Nouveau (a syncretistic religion founded in the country in 1937, which combines Christian doctrine, traditional indigenous rituals, and practical concern for social, political, and economic progress for Africans), the Pentecostal Church of Cote d'Ivoire, the Messianic Church, the Limoudim of Rabbi Jesus (a small Christian group, the origins of which are unknown), the Unification Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Interdenominational Church, the Eckankar religion (a syncretistic religion founded in 1965 in Nigeria that sees human passion as an obstacle to uniting a person's divine qualities), and Buddhism. Many religious groups in the country are associated with American religious groups.

Most of the country's many syncretistic religions are forms of Christianity that contain some traditional indigenous practices and rituals. Many of these have been founded by Ivoirian or other African prophets and are organized around and dependent upon the founder's personality. Some emphasize faith healing or the sale of sacred objects imbued with supernatural powers to bring health and good luck. Many nominal Christians and Muslims practice some aspects of traditional indigenous religions, especially in difficult times.

Generally, there has been a trend towards conversion by practitioners of traditional religions to Christianity and Islam. Missionary work, urbanization, immigration, and higher education levels have led to a decline in the percentage of practitioners of traditional religion from 37 percent in 1975 to 11.9 percent in 1998.

Immigrants from other parts of Africa generally are at least nominally Muslim or Christian. The majority of foreign missionaries are European or American representatives of established religions, but some Nigerians and Congolese also have set up churches.

In the past, Catholic priests tended to be better educated than leaders of other religions. Numerous Catholic schools were founded in the country in the early 1900's, during French colonial rule, and citizens who attended these schools generally received good educations and came to make up a disproportionately large part of the country's elites. Many senior government officials, including all three heads of state since independence, have been Catholics. The Baoule ethnic minority, which has dominated the State and the ruling Democratic Party of Cote d'Ivoire (PDCI) from independence in 1960 until 1999, largely is Catholic, although some Baoules continue to practice traditional indigenous religion and a few practice Islam.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution that was suspended following the December 24, 1999, coup d'etat provided for freedom of religion, and the previous Government generally respected this right. The new Constitution, implemented on August 4, 2000, also provides for freedom of religion; however, the new Government that came into power following the October 22, 2000, presidential election at times restricted this right in practice. There is no state religion, but for historical and ethnic reasons the Government informally favors Christianity, particularly the Roman Catholic Church.

In past years, the Government has paid for the construction of Catholic cathedrals; however, the Government also sponsors or finances the construction of shrines for groups other than the Catholic Church. During the period covered by this report, the Government was directing the construction of the Plateau Mosque in central Abidjan and financing it with the help of governments or government-affiliated religious organizations of some largely Islamic Arab countries.

The Government establishes requirements for religious groups under a 1939 French law. All religious groups wishing to operate in the country must submit to the Ministry of the Interior a file including the group's bylaws, the names of the founding members, the date of founding (or date on which the founder received the revelation of his or her calling), the minutes of the general assembly, the names of members of the administrative board, and other information. The Interior Ministry investigates the backgrounds of the founding members to ascertain that the group has no politically subversive purpose. However, in practice the Government's regula-

tion of religious groups generally has not been unduly restrictive since 1990, when the Government legalized opposition political parties.

Although nontraditional religious groups, like all public secular associations, are required to register with the Government, no penalties are imposed on a group that fails to register. In practice registration can bring advantages of public recognition, invitation to official ceremonies and events, publicity, gifts, and school subsidies. No religious group has complained of arbitrary registration procedures or recognition; however, the Government does not register traditional indigenous religious groups.

The Government grants no tax or other benefits to religious groups; however, some religious groups have gained some favors after individual negotiations. Examples include reductions in the cost of resident alien registration, customs exemptions on certain religious items, and, in some cases, privileges similar to those of diplomats. No particular religion is favored consistently in this manner. Occasionally a state-owned company grants favors to religious leaders, such as a reduction in air-plane fare.

Foreign missionaries must meet the same requirements as any foreigner, including resident alien registration and identification card requirements. However, there were no reports that foreign missionaries were denied such registration arbitrarily.

Religious instruction is permitted in public schools and usually offered after normal class hours. Such instruction is offered by established Islamic, Catholic, and Protestant groups.

In 1999 Roman Catholic Church groups began to operate four community radio stations: Radio Espoir in Abidjan, Radio Paix Sanwi in Aboisso, Radio Notre Dame in Yamoussoukro, and Radio Dix-Huit Montagnes in Man. Although the Muslim associations received a broadcast license in 1999, no Muslim station had begun broadcasting by the end of the period covered by this report. Catholics, Muslims, and Protestants have had their own religious programs on national television and radio for over 20 years. On significant Christian and Islamic holy days, national television often broadcasts films on the lives of the founders of those religions.

The Government has taken some positive steps to promote interfaith understanding. Government officials, including the President and his religious advisers, make a point of appearing at major religious celebrations and events organized by a wide variety of faiths and groups. There is no government-sponsored forum for interfaith dialog, but the Government often invites leaders of various religious communities (but not of traditional indigenous religious groups) to attend official ceremonies and to sit on deliberative and advisory committees, including the Mediation Committee for National Reconciliation.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government monitors minority religions, to the extent of registering them, but does not control them closely; however, the proliferation of new groups has caused some concern among Government officials and citizens. In his 1999 New Year's greetings, then-President Henri Konan Bedie advised the public to be wary of new groups that are not identified clearly and warned such groups against taking advantage of the country's tradition of tolerance to commit acts of fraud or manipulation. The Government closely watches some religious groups, including Islamic associations and minority groups for signs of political activity that it considers subversive.

In March 1999 and April 2001, local governments closed some Harrist churches, particularly in Bingerville and Grand Labou, to prevent an escalation of intrareligious violence (see Section III). Most of the churches were reopened by January 2001, following government mediation and the restoration of unity within the Harrist church. Almost all of the remaining churches were reopened by the end of the period covered by this report.

Police and gendarmes searched 17 mosques for arms prior to the October 22, 2000, presidential election. On August 27, 2000, approximately 25 gendarmes searched a mosque for arms that they suspected the Muslim community was hiding for the RDR. The mosque, which is located in Abidjan's Riviera 2 neighborhood, is headed by one of the leaders of the National Islamic Council (CNI), Imam Sekou Sylla. Gendarmes also mistakenly searched the house of one of the imam's neighbors. The gendarmes did not have warrants to conduct these searches.

The Government informally favors the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic Church leaders had a much stronger voice in government affairs than their Islamic counterparts, which led to feelings of disenfranchisement among the Muslim population. After assuming power following the coup, General Robert Guei indicated that one of the goals of the transition government was to end this favoritism and put all of the major religious faiths on an equal footing. However, in practice General Guei

did not take any steps to bring this about, nor has his successor, President Laurent Gbagbo.

Some Muslims believe that their religious or ethnic affiliation makes them targets of discrimination by the Government with regard to both employment and the renewal of national identity cards. Due to the tense political situation in the country and the ethnic divisions along which political party lines are drawn, northern Muslims sometimes are scrutinized more closely in the identity card application process. As these northern Muslims share names, style of dress, and customs with several of the country's predominantly Muslim neighboring countries, they sometimes are accused wrongly of attempting to obtain nationality cards illegally in order to vote or otherwise take advantage of citizenship.

Muslims often have had to struggle for state benefits that came more easily to practitioners of other religions. For example, Catholic and Protestant schools are regarded as official schools supervised by the Ministry of Education and subsidized by the Government. However, until 1994 Islamic schools were regarded as religious schools, were supervised by the Ministry of the Interior, and were unsubsidized even if they followed official school curriculums. Since 1994 Islamic schools that follow official curriculums have been subsidized by the Government. The Government recognized no Muslim religious holidays until 1974 and did not recognize all major Muslim religious holidays until 1994. Churches always have had organized Christian pilgrimages without formal government supervision, but until 1993 the Ministry of the Interior supervised Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca (the Hajj).

In May and June 2000, during his travels to various regions of the country, General Guei continually asked imams and other Muslim leaders to stay out of politics. The new Constitution and eligibility requirements for presidential candidates were being debated at the time, and the military government warned Muslim imams to refrain from political discourse in their sermons. The military Government suspected the imams of supporting coreligionist RDR president Alassane Dramane Ouattara, whose eligibility was at the center of the debates and whom General Guei did not want to have run for president. The Government claimed that the imams had been jeopardizing security with sermons that were too politically charged.

Other government officials also made public statements criticizing Muslim leaders. For example, on November 30, 2000, Minister of the Interior Emile Boga Doudou accused CNI President El Hadj Idriss Kone Koudouss of accepting \$50,000 (35 million FCFA) to plan and organize disturbances following the pending disqualification of Alassane Ouattara's candidacy. Boga Doudou also suggested that imam Koudouss was a member of the RDR. On December 5, 2000, Boga Doudou displayed firearms on national television, which he said the armed forces had seized in a mosque.

Traditional indigenous religions, which are not registered officially as religions, rarely are included in official or unofficial lists of the country's religions. There is no generally accepted system for classifying the country's diverse traditional religious practices, which vary not only by ethnic group, but also by region, village, and family, as well as by gender and age group. In addition, members of the country's largely Christianized or Islamicized urban elites, which effectively control the State, generally seem disinclined to accord to traditional indigenous religions the social status accorded to Christianity and Islam. No traditional indigenous religious leader (except for traditional rulers, who also may perform some traditional religious functions) is known to have been invited to present New Year's greetings to the President or to take part in a government advisory council. However, traditional Akan chiefs very often are invited to pour alcohol on the ground at the beginning of important ceremonies, even the most official ones, in order to bless the events.

The Government does not prohibit links to foreign coreligionists but informally discourages connections with politically radical fundamentalist movements, such as Islamic groups based in Iran and Libya.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

Street demonstrations erupted following the October 22, 2000, presidential elections. Violent clashes among security forces, RDR militants, and militants from the FPI resulted in the deaths of more than 200 persons in Youpougon, a majority whom were identified as Muslims and RDR supporters. The Government, as well as several international and national human rights organizations, conducted investigations and published exhaustive reports on the killings. According to such reports, the gendarmes from Ababo Gendarmerie Camp most likely were responsible for the Youpougon killings. During the violence, several churches and mosques were damaged or destroyed, along with religious texts and sacred objects. Eighteen mosques were burned and 18 others were damaged throughout the country. Eight

churches were damaged or burned, and several documents and vehicles were destroyed.

Following the November 30, 2000, Supreme Court decision to disqualify Alassane Ouattara from the legislative elections, thousands of RDR supporters protested the decision. According to the Government, approximately 13 persons were killed in violent clashes with the military and gendarmes; the RDR estimated that 30 persons were killed. The Ivoirian Movement for Human Rights reported that 37 persons had been killed, most of whom were shot, and that several hundred persons had been injured. Gendarmes killed a 60-year-old Guinean man in front of his family as he was preparing for Muslim prayers on December 4, 2000; he was shot reportedly because he was wearing a Moslem robe, which the gendarmes believed marked him as a supporter of the RDR. In addition to the killings, security forces and rival political groups allegedly damaged or destroyed four mosques and four churches. Furthermore, following the RDR's December 4, 2000, demonstration, security forces arrested imams and approximately 200 Muslim worshippers in several mosques in the Abidjan's Abobo district. Security forces beat imam Bakary and others, stripped them of their clothes, and detained them for several days in Abidjan's police and gendarme camps. The Minister of State for Interior and Decentralization publicly accused the imams of hiding arms in their mosques. The Government released the imams and their worshippers by the end of 2000, following mediation by the Mediation Committee on National Reconciliation.

Citing the killings of hundreds of Muslims during the October and December 2000 demonstrations, CNI President Koudouss accused the authorities and the armed forces of having planned a genocide, adding that Muslims would not feel "reconciled" until the Government apologized to the Muslim community. The Government had not responded by the end of the period covered by this report.

On December 5, 2000, after youths set fire to a mosque in Abidjan's Abobo district, the anti-riot brigade used tear gas against and beat Muslims who had gathered to inspect the damage. When Imam Bassama Sylla attempted to intervene, the police stripped him and detained him. Police also entered at least two other mosques in Abobo and detained persons inside.

In addition to searching the homes of Islamic leaders, security forces also summoned Islamic leaders for questioning on several occasions based on suspicions that they were plotting civil unrest with the RDR.

On July 21, 2000, the military government briefly detained and questioned CNI President El Hadj Idriss Kone Koudouss for encouraging Muslims to vote against the new Constitution, which he argued reinforces the concept of "Ivoirity," a doctrine that discriminates against Ivoirians of mixed or foreign origins. Imam Koudouss also claimed that harassment of Muslims has increased since former President Bedie introduced "Ivoirity" in 1994. The CNSP noted that sermons such as Koudouss's could be considered inciting violence and rebellion. Koudouss was released after the warning.

On August 24, 2000, the gendarmes detained and questioned El Hadj Koudouss, four other prominent imams from the CNI, and one Islamic youth leader. The Government accused them of procuring arms, in cooperation with RDR presidential candidate Ouattara, in order to destabilize the country. The gendarmes released all six after questioning. According to the imams, this was the fifth time that leaders of the CNI had been called in for questioning since the coup. Muslims say that such acts by the Government are an attempt to make the Muslim community a "scapegoat" for the country's problems.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations among the various religious communities generally are amicable; however, there is some societal discrimination against Muslims and followers of traditional indigenous religions.

The country's Islamic communities are subject to a great deal of societal discrimination. Some non-Muslims have objected to the construction of mosques, such as the new mosque in Abidjan's Plateau district, because the Islamic duty to give alms daily may attract beggars to neighborhoods containing mosques. Some non-Muslims also object to having to hear the muezzins' calls to prayer. Some persons consider all Muslims as foreigners or fundamentalists. Muslim citizens often are treated as

foreigners by their fellow citizens, including by government officials, because most Muslims are members of northern ethnic groups that also are found in other African countries from which there has been substantial immigration into the country. Muslims also frequently were discriminated against because of ethnic origin or presumed support of Ouattara's candidacy. Many Muslims are northerners and tended to support the presidential candidacy of Ouattara.

Followers of traditional indigenous religions also are subject to societal discrimination. Many leaders of nontraditional religions, such as Christianity or Islam, look down on practitioners of traditional indigenous religions as pagans, practitioners of black magic or human sacrifice. Some Christians or Muslims refuse to associate with practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. The practices of traditional indigenous religions often are shrouded by secrecy and include exclusive initiation rites, oaths of silence, and taboos against writing down orally transmitted history. However, there have been no reports of human sacrifice in the country since well before independence. Although the purported practice of black magic or witchcraft continues to be feared widely, it generally is discouraged by traditional indigenous religions, aspects of which commonly purport to offer protection from witchcraft. Traditional indigenous religions commonly involve belief in one supreme deity as well as lesser deities or spirits that are to be praised or appeased, some of whom may in some religions be believed to inhabit or otherwise be associated with particular places, natural objects, or man-made images. However, many practitioners of traditional indigenous religions are unaware of societal discrimination and have not complained.

Conflicts between and within religious groups have surfaced occasionally. In the past, members of the Limoudim of Rabbi Jesus, a small Christian group of unknown origin, have criticized and sometimes attacked other Christian groups for allegedly failing to follow the teachings of Jesus; however, there were no reports of such attacks during the period covered by this report.

The Celestial Christians are divided because of a leadership struggle, as are the Harrists who have resorted to violence on occasion to resolve their differences. In March 2000, during the internal struggle in the Harrist Church, clergy leader Barthelemy Akre Yasse struck Harrist National Committee president Tchotche Mel Felix from the church rolls for insubordination. This battle for church leadership at the national level led to violent confrontations between church members at the local level. In March and April 2000, local governments closed Harrist churches in which the confrontations took place in order to prevent an escalation in the violence (see Section II). Most of the churches were reopened by January 2001 after the restoration of unity within the Harrist church. In January 2001, church members from all throughout the country gathered at the Harrist church in Bingerville, one of the churches that had been closed, to celebrate their restored unity.

There are several examples of interfaith cooperation. Once a year, on New Year's Eve, members of all Christian religious groups gather in the National Stadium in Abidjan to keep a nightlong vigil and pray. When serious social problems have arisen, simultaneous Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim prayer ceremonies have been held in churches, temples, and mosques to ask for divine assistance. Kouassi-Datekro, a town in the Akan region in the eastern part of the country, is famous for ecumenical events involving simultaneous prayer services of all faiths. Since 1990 religious leaders from diverse groups have assembled on their own initiative to mediate in times of political conflict; however, no leaders of traditional indigenous religious groups have been included. On January 25, 2001, the Catholic Archbishop of Abidjan Bernard Agre and other religious leaders attended the funeral of Tidiane Ba, the imam of one of the largest mosques. When the Pope elevated Archbishop Agre to the rank of Cardinal on March 11, 2001, leaders of the Islamic, Protestant, and syncretistic religious groups attended the Cardinal's Mass of Thanksgiving.

In September 1997, the Research Group in Democracy and Social and Economic Development of Cote d'Ivoire (GERDDES-CI), a democracy and civic education group, created the Forum of Religious Confessions. The Forum includes the leaders of many of the country's religious faiths, including Catholics, Muslims, various Protestants groups, several syncretist groups, the Association of Traditional Priests, and the "Bossonists," an association of indigenous Akan religious priests. The Forum is headed by the leader of the Celestial Christian Church, and its objective is to promote dialog, increase understanding, and improve religious leaders' and groups' relationships. The Forum also mediates in times of serious social or political conflicts, as it did in 2000 and 2001 during violent conflict among rival political and student groups (see Section II).

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy has monitored and reported on the status of religious freedom, developed and maintained contacts with leaders of diverse religious groups, and discussed religious freedom issues with government officials in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

In 1997 with financial assistance from the Embassy, GERDDES-CI helped religious groups in the country establish a Forum of Religious Confessions, which included all of the main religious groups (see Section III). The Forum continued to meet during the period covered by this report.

DJIBOUTI

The Constitution, while declaring Islam to be the state religion, provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, proselytizing is discouraged.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report; however, there were credible reports that the police targeted Ethiopian Pentecostal Christians living illegally in the country when conducting the apprehension and deportation of illegal aliens.

Citizens generally are very tolerant of one another in the practice of their religion.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights, and Embassy officers meet with leaders of religious communities.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of approximately 9,000 square miles and its population is estimated at 650,000. Over 99 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim. There are a small number of Catholics, Protestants, and followers of the Baha'i Faith, together accounting for less than 1 percent of the population. There are no known practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. Because all citizens officially are considered Muslims if they do not adhere to another faith, there are no figures available on the number of atheists in the country.

The sizable foreign community supports the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, and Ethiopian Orthodox Churches.

A small number of foreign Christian missionary groups operate in the country, including the Eastern Mennonite Mission, Red Sea Team International, and Life International.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution, while declaring Islam to be the state religion, provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, proselytizing is discouraged.

Although Islam is the state religion, the Government imposes no sanctions on those who choose to ignore Islamic teachings or practice other faiths. In May 2000, the Government established diplomatic relations with the Vatican.

The Qadi is the country's senior judge of Islamic law and is appointed by the Minister of Justice. The current Qadi was appointed in June 1999. His predecessor was named Minister of State for Charitable and Religious Affairs under the Ministry of Justice. This position was created in May 1999, when newly elected President Ismail Omar Guelleh formed his Cabinet and declared that Islam would be a central tenet of his government.

The Government requires that religious groups be registered. There were no reports that the Government refused to register any religious groups.

The country observes the important Muslim holidays as national holidays, including Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, the Prophet Mohammed's birthday, and the Islamic new year. The country also celebrates Christmas as an official holiday.

Religion is not taught in public schools.

Foreign clergy and missionaries are permitted to perform charitable works and to sell religious books. These groups, which focus on humanitarian services in the education and health sectors, reportedly faced no harassment during the period covered by this report. Foreign missionary groups are licensed by the Government to operate schools.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

There is no legal prohibition against proselytizing; however, proselytizing is discouraged. There were a few occasions when members of the Baha'i Faith were detained and questioned by the police regarding possible proselytizing activities; however, they were not charged with a crime and eventually were released.

Islamic law based on the Koran is used only with regard to family matters and is administered by the Qadi. Civil marriage is permitted only for non-Muslim foreigners. Muslims are required to marry in a religious ceremony, and non-Muslim men may only marry a Muslim woman after converting to Islam.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

There were credible reports that the police targeted Ethiopian Pentecostal Christians living illegally in the country when conducting the apprehension and deportation of illegal aliens.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

The large presence of French Catholics and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians for almost a century has led to considerable familiarity and tolerance of other faiths by the Muslim majority. Persons born as Catholics face no discrimination from Muslim relatives. In many cases, these Catholics are children or grandchildren of persons raised in French Catholic orphanages during the colonial period.

In Djiboutian Somali society, clan membership has more influence over a person's life than does religion. Djiboutian Somalis who are Christians often are buried according to Islamic traditions by relatives who do not recognize their non-Muslim faith.

There is no formal interfaith dialog. The Catholic Church organizes an annual celebration with all the other Christian churches. The Qadi receives Ramadan greetings from Pope John Paul II. He meets with the heads of other faiths only at government-organized ceremonies.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

U.S. Embassy officials discuss religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Embassy representatives periodically meet with leaders and members of religious communities and with U.S. nongovernmental organizations with a missionary component.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

The Fundamental Law of 1995 provides for freedom of religion; however, in practice the Government limited this right in some respects.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. The Government discourages criticism by religious groups and restricts activities outside church premises.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Embassy in Cameroon discusses religious freedom issues with the Government during periodic visits to the country in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 10,831 square miles and its population is 474,214. The population is approximately 93 percent Christian, 5 percent practitioners of traditional indigenous religions, and less than 1 percent each Muslim, Baha'i, other religions, and those who are nonreligious. The principal religion is Roman Catholicism, dating from the Spanish colonial period, when almost the entire population was baptized into this faith. Of the Christian population, approximately 87 percent at least nominally are Catholic, and approximately 4.5 percent belong to Protestant denominations. In practice the actual figure for traditional indigenous religions is

much higher, although the exact figures are unknown. Many baptized Catholics reportedly still follow traditional beliefs. There is no known organized Christian worship in large parts of the country, in particular in the center and north of the mainland and on the smaller islands. The ethnic minorities, such as the Ngumba, Yaka, Puku, and Benga have no known organized religious congregations.

Foreign missionary groups operate in the country, both in Bioko and on the mainland, including Seventh Day Adventists, Assemblies of God, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Nondenominational evangelical Christian groups also are present.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The 1995 Fundamental Law provides for freedom of religion; however, in practice the Government limited this right in some respects.

The Government generally allows preaching, religious teaching, education, and practice by believers. The Government requires permission for any activities outside church walls; however, in practice this requirement does not appear to hinder organized religious groups.

A religious organization must be registered formally with the Ministry of Justice and Religion before its religious activities are allowed. While religious groups must be approved and registered in order to function legally, there were no reports during the period covered by this report that the Government had refused to register any group. However, information regarding the exact procedure for registering a religious denomination was not available. For example, the Assemblies of God received official recognition in 1993; however, from 1987 until 1993, the group was able to operate although it was not recognized officially. The approval process usually takes several years, but such delay apparently is due primarily to general bureaucratic slowness and is not the result of a policy designed to impede the operation of any religious group. The exact number of registered denominations is not available.

Foreign missionaries work throughout the country, generally without impediment.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government and President Teodoro Obiang Nguema's ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) have reacted defensively to any criticism, and the Government continued to restrict freedom of expression of the clergy, particularly regarding any open criticism of the Government.

A 1992 law includes a stated official preference towards the Catholic Church and the Reform Church of Equatorial Guinea due to their traditional roots and well-known influence in the social and cultural life of the populace. For example, a Roman Catholic Mass normally is part of any major ceremonial function such as the October 12 national day. In the past, the Government restricted the activities of the Catholic Church; however, there were no reports of restrictions during the period covered by this report.

Religious study is required in schools and is usually, but not exclusively, Catholic. In the first half of 2001, some schools considered banning a number of Jehovah's Witnesses students from class after their teachers complained that the students would not sing the national anthem. Discussions between the Minister of Justice and Religion and the students' parents resolved the issue.

Autonomous Rural Development (DAR), a Catholic NGO, sometimes is required to have a government delegate present at its meetings. This restriction apparently is in response to government fears that the DAR encourages antigovernment sentiment.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

As of January 2001, the Government no longer requires that Catholic priests obtain government permission before celebrating Mass. This restriction had been put in place in previous years because of the Catholic Church's repeated criticisms of human rights violations, social injustice, and corruption in the country.

In February 1998, security forces arrested a priest, Father Eduardo Losha Belope—a member of the Bubi ethnic group and president of the Malabo chapter of the Catholic nongovernmental organization (NGO), Caritas—in connection with the January 1998 revolt. In January 2001, Father Belope was released as part of a presidential decree reducing sentences for many prisoners.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There generally are amicable relations between the various religious groups in the country. Some religious groups believe that they face societal pressures within their regions; however, no specific incidents or violence stemming from religious discrimination have been reported, and such concerns may reflect ethnic or individual as much as religious differences.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy based in Yaounde, Cameroon, maintains contact with religious groups, especially American missionaries in the country, and monitors any religious initiatives during periodic visits. During the period covered by this report, embassy staff met with various religious leaders, including members of the Catholic hierarchy, Protestant missionaries, and religiously affiliated NGO's.

ERITREA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, the Government restricts this right in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. The Government continued to harass, detain, and discriminate against members of the small community of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Citizens generally are very tolerant of one another in the practice of their religion; however, societal attitudes toward Jehovah's Witnesses are the exception to this widespread tolerance. During the period covered by this report, there was a slight reduction in societal hostility toward Jehovah's Witnesses.

The U.S. Embassy meets regularly with leaders of the religious community and the Government's director of religious affairs. Embassy officers have raised the case of Jehovah's Witnesses with government officials.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 48,489 square miles, and its population is approximately 3.5 million. Although reliable statistics are not available, approximately 50 percent of the population are Sunni Muslim and approximately 40 percent are Orthodox Christian. The population also includes a small number of Eastern Rite and Roman Catholics (5 percent), Protestants (2 percent), smaller numbers of Seventh-Day Adventists, and less than 1,500 members of Jehovah's Witnesses. A small minority, perhaps 2 percent, practices traditional indigenous religions. Also present in very small numbers are practicing Buddhists, Hindus, and Baha'is. Generally the population in eastern and western lowlands predominantly is Muslim, and in the highlands the population predominantly is Christian. There are very few atheists. Religious participation is high among all groups.

Within the country's geographic, ethnic, and political concentrations, the majority of members of the Tigrinya ethnic group are Orthodox Christian, with the exception of the Djiberti Tigrinya, who are Muslim. The majority of the Tigre, Saho, Nara, Afar, Rashaida, Beja, and Blen ethnic groups are Muslim. A majority of the Kunama are Roman Catholics or Muslims, and some are practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. Approximately 40 percent of the Blen are Christian, the majority of whom are Catholic. The majority of members of the Kunama ethnic group are Catholic, Muslim, and practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. The central and southern highland areas, which generally are more economically developed than the lowlands, predominantly are populated by Christian Tigrinyas, and also some Muslim Djiberti and Saho. The Afar and Rashaida ethnic groups, and some of the Saho and Tigre ethnic groups live in the eastern lowlands. The Blen live on the border between the western lowlands and the central highlands and are concentrated in the Keren area, which also includes a significant minority of Tigre and Tigrinya speakers. The Beja, Kunama, Nara, and the majority of Tigre live in the western lowlands.

Some foreign missionaries operate in the country, including representatives of Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim faiths. There are also several international religious nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) that provide humanitarian aid, including Caritas, Dutch Interchurch Aid, Lutheran Church Aid, and the Mufti's Relief Organization, the relief arm of the Muslim religion. Catholic Relief Services began operating in the country during the period covered by this report.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, the Government restricts this right in the case of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Constitution provides for the freedom to practice any religion and to "manifest such practice," and Islam and Christianity are practiced widely and tolerated throughout the country with persons free to worship at the mosque or church of their choice; however, the Government continued to harass, detain, and discriminate against members of the small community of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Government does not require religious groups to register; however, because the Government owns all land, any religious organization that seeks facilities for worship other than private homes must seek government approval to build such facilities. There were no reports that the Government refused to approve the use or construction of facilities by any religious organization. Religious organizations, including religious NGO's, do not receive duty free privileges, although they sometimes are allowed to import items under the reduced duty structure used for corporations. The Government prohibits political activity by religious groups, and the Government's Directorate of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Local Government monitors religious compliance with this proscription against political activity.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Although there were past reports that the Government discouraged proselytizing by members of one faith among adherents of another, and by foreign religious groups and NGO's, the Government permitted such activity during the period covered by this report.

In a 1995 proclamation, the Government described specific guidelines on the role of religion and religiously affiliated NGO's in development and government, stating that development, politics, and public administration are the sole responsibility of the Government and citizens.

The 1995 Proclamation bans religious organizations from involvement in politics and restricts the right of religious media to comment on political matters. Pursuant to the 1995 proclamation, religious organizations are permitted to fund, but not initiate or implement, development projects; however, this proclamation was not enforced in practice—several religious organizations executed small-scale development projects without government interference. The proclamation also set out rules governing relations between religious organizations and foreign sponsors.

Muslims and Roman Catholics were required to pay a Rehabilitation Tax to recover properties that were expropriated by the previous regime; however, the tax was not enforced as rigorously against the Orthodox Church properties.

In April 1998, the authorities informed all religious organizations that all schools run by religious denominations providing general education would be incorporated into the public school system. At the time it was not made clear whether the clerical authorities would continue to administer the curriculum with government oversight or whether the school faculty would be absorbed into the Ministry of Education. However, no action was taken to implement this initiative because of the outbreak of the border conflict with Ethiopia. In 1998 the Government decreed that religiously affiliated organizations were prohibited from running kindergartens; however, this decree was not carried out. According to officials in the Religious Affairs Office, the Government allows religious schools to operate independently as long as they adhere to a standard curriculum.

There are no chaplains in the military; however, military personnel are free to worship at nearby houses of worship.

There were no reports that freedom of religion was restricted in areas under Ethiopian occupation during the period of the occupation.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

Jehovah's Witnesses have several churches and members are not barred from meeting in private homes; however, the Government continued to harass, detain, and discriminate against members of the small community of Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1994 in accordance with a presidential decree, the Government revoked the trading licenses of some members of Jehovah's Witnesses and dismissed most of those who worked in the civil service. This governmental action resulted in economic, employment, and travel difficulties for many members of Jehovah's Witnesses, especially former civil servants and businessmen. In April 1997, the Government labor office issued a form to all employers in Asmara and the surrounding area requesting information on any government personnel who were members of Jehovah's Witnesses. In addition to these measures, members of Jehovah's Witnesses also often

are denied identification cards, passports, exit visas, trading licenses, and government housing unless they hide their religion.

Most members of Jehovah's Witnesses have refused on religious grounds to participate in national service or to vote. This has led to widespread criticism that members of Jehovah's Witnesses collectively were shirking their civic duty. Some Muslims also have objected to universal national service because of the requirement that women perform military duty. The Government does not excuse individuals who object to national service for religious reasons or reasons of conscience, nor does the Government allow alternative service. Although persons from other religious groups, including Muslims, reportedly have been punished in past years for failure to participate in national service, only members of Jehovah's Witnesses have been subject to dismissal from the civil service, had their trading licenses revoked, been evicted from government-owned housing, and been denied passports, identity cards, and exit visas. However, there were no reports that Jehovah's Witnesses who performed national service and participated in the national independence referendum were subject to discrimination.

In 1998 several members of Jehovah's Witnesses were arrested for failure to comply with national service laws and some were tried, although there is no information available regarding the verdicts or sentences in these cases. At the end of the period covered by this report, four members of Jehovah's Witnesses remained in detention without charge and without being tried for failing to participate in national service. These individuals have been detained for varying periods of time, some for more than 5 years, without charge. The maximum penalty for refusing to do national service is 3 years. Ministry of Justice officials have denied that any members of Jehovah's Witnesses were being held without charges, although they acknowledge that some members of Jehovah's Witnesses and a number of Muslims are in jail serving sentences for convictions on charges of evading national service. There is no indication that any persons are detained or imprisoned solely because of their religious beliefs or practices; however, the Government has singled out members of Jehovah's Witnesses for harsher treatment than that received by members of other faiths for similar actions.

The army resorted to various forms of extreme physical punishment to force objectors, including some members of Jehovah's Witnesses, to perform military service.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Citizens generally are very tolerant of one another in the practice of their religion. Mosques and Christian churches of all orders coexist throughout the country, although Islam tends to predominate in the lowlands and Christianity in the highlands. In Asmara Christian and Muslim holidays are respected by all religions. Some holidays are celebrated jointly.

Societal attitudes toward Jehovah's Witnesses are the exception to widespread religious tolerance. Members of Jehovah's Witnesses generally are disliked and face some societal discrimination because of their refusal to participate in the independence referendum in 1993 and to perform national service, a refusal that is seen widely as unpatriotic. However, in the period covered by this report, there was a slight reduction in societal hostility towards Jehovah's Witnesses.

Church leaders of most denominations, in particular, leaders of the Orthodox Christian, Catholic, Islamic, and Protestant denominations, meet routinely and engage in ongoing efforts to foster cooperation and understanding between religions, with the exception of Jehovah's Witnesses. Leaders of the four major religious organizations enjoy excellent interfaith relations. In July 2000, in Oslo, Norway, these leaders met with their Ethiopian counterparts for the fourth time in an ecumenical peace effort to resolve the Eritrea-Ethiopia conflict.

In 1999 leaders of the Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Muslim faiths created Good Deeds in Unity, an organization to help ethnic Eritrean expellees, Eritreans displaced by the war, and other needy persons in the country. This organization works with the government relief agency, the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Affairs Commission.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy meets regularly with leaders of the religious community and the Government's director of religious affairs.

The U.S. Ambassador and other embassy officers have raised the case of Jehovah's Witnesses with government officials in the President's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the High Court, the Ministry of Justice, and in media interviews.

ETHIOPIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, on occasion local authorities infringed on this right.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. Muslim leaders continued to complain that public school authorities sometimes interfered with their free practice of Islam. Protestant groups occasionally complained that local officials discriminate against them when seeking land for churches and cemeteries.

While the relationship among religions in society is generally amicable, there continued to be pockets of interreligious tension and criticism between followers of evangelical and Pentecostal churches, on the one hand, and Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, on the other. During the period covered by this report, a violent conflict broke out between Christians and Muslims.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The U.S. Embassy meets regularly with the leaders of all of the religious communities.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 699,946 square miles and a total population of approximately 63 million. Over 40 percent of the population adhere to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), the single largest religious group. The EOC claims 50 percent of the country's total population, or more than 31 million adherents, and 110,450 churches. The EOC is predominant in the northern regions of Tigray and Amhara. Approximately 40 percent of the population is Muslim, although many Muslims claim that the actual percentage is higher. Islam is most prevalent in the Somali and Afar regions, as well as in parts of Oromia. Evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism are the fastest growing faiths and now constitute more than 10 percent of the population. According to the Evangelical Church Fellowship, there are 7.4 million Protestants, although this figure may be a high estimate. Established Protestant churches such as Mekane Yesus and Kale Hiwot are strongest in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNNPR), western and central Oromia, and in urban areas around the country. There are more than 6,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in the country. Oriental Rite and Latin Rite Roman Catholics, Jews, animists, and other practitioners of traditional indigenous religions make up most of the remaining population. There are very few atheists. Although precise data are not available, active participation in religious services is high throughout the country.

In Addis Ababa and western Gondar in the Amhara region there are very small concentrations of Ethiopian Jews (Falashas) and those who claim that their ancestors were forced to convert from Judaism to Ethiopian Orthodoxy (Feles Mora). Approximately 3,000 Feles Mora migrated voluntarily from the western Amhara region to Addis Ababa in 1991 at the time of "Operation Solomon," when a large number of Falashas were airlifted to Israel. The Feles Mora also seek to immigrate to Israel. The number of Feles Mora in the country at the end of the period covered by this report was approximately 23,000. Israeli officials evaluate the Feles Mora immigration claims on a case-by-case basis and estimate that by the end of 2000 approximately 100 individuals were immigrating to Israel under Israel's law of return each week. Approximately 2,000 claims are processed annually by the Israeli Embassy in Addis Ababa. All of the eligible Falashas in the country had immigrated to Israel by December 1999.

A large number of foreign missionary groups operate in the country, including Catholic and American Protestant missionaries. Protestant organizations, operating under the umbrella of the 12-member Evangelical Church Fellowship of Ethiopia, sponsor or support missionary work: the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the New Covenant Baptist Church, the Baptist Evangelical Association, Mekane Yesus Church (associated with the Lutheran Church), Kale Hiwot Church (associated with Sim-Service in Mission), Hiwot Berhan Church (associated with the Swedish Philadelphia Church), Genet Church (associated with the Finnish Mission), Lutheran-Presbyterian Church of Ethiopia, Emnet Christos, Muluwongel (Full Gospel) Church,

and Messerete Kristos (associated with the Mennonite Mission). There is also missionary activity among Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, on occasion local authorities infringed on this right. The Constitution requires the separation of religion and the state and prohibits a state religion, and the Government respects these rights in practice.

The Government requires that religious groups be registered. Religious institutions, like nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), are registered with the Ministry of Justice, and must renew their registration every year. Unlike NGO's, religious groups are not subject to a rigorous registration process. Under current law, a religious organization that undertakes development activities must register its development wing separately as an NGO. Religious groups are not accorded duty-free status. Religious groups are given free government land for churches, schools, hospitals, and cemeteries; however, the title to the land remains with the Government, and the land, other than that used for prayer houses or cemeteries, can be taken back at any time. Unlike in previous years, Jehovah's Witnesses were allotted land by the Government outside of Addis Ababa; however, because there are no unoccupied lots available in Addis Ababa, Jehovah's Witnesses residing there lease land from private owners. Religious groups, like private individuals or businesses, must apply to regional and local governments for land allocation. An interfaith effort was underway at the end of the period covered by this report to promote revision of the law in order for religious organizations to obtain duty-free status.

The Government officially recognizes both Christian and Muslim holidays, and has mandated a 2-hour lunch break on Fridays to allow Muslims to go to a mosque to pray. The Government also agreed to a request from Muslim students at Addis Ababa Commercial College to delay the start of afternoon classes until 1:30 p.m. to permit them to perform afternoon prayers at a nearby mosque.

When the Government began deporting Eritreans and Ethiopians of Eritrean origin in 1998, it decided that Jehovah's Witnesses of Eritrean origin, who might face religious persecution in Eritrea, were not to be subject to deportation.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government does not issue work visas to foreign religious workers unless they are attached to the development wing of a religious organization.

Evangelical leaders have complained of strict regulations on the importation of Bibles, as well as heavy customs duty on Bibles and other religious articles; however, Bibles and religious articles are subject to the same customs duty as all imported books and most imported items.

Muslim leaders complained that public school authorities sometimes interfered with their free practice of Islam. Certain public school teachers in the SNNPR, Addis Ababa, and in the Amhara region objected to Muslim schoolgirls covering their heads with scarves while at school. In September 1999, Muslim girls who had boycotted classes in Woldeia in the Amhara region over the issue of wearing headscarves to class, returned to classes with their scarves. Muslim leaders stated that in some schools, Muslim girls go without head coverings in order to avoid similar problems.

The Government has interpreted the constitutional provision for separation of religion and state to mean that religious instruction is not permitted in schools, whether they are public or private schools. Catholic, Orthodox, evangelical, and Muslim-owned and operated schools are not permitted to teach religion as a course of study. Most private schools teach morals courses as part of school curricula, and the Government Education Bureau in Addis Ababa has complained that such courses are not free of religious influence. Churches are permitted to have Sunday schools, the Koran is taught at mosques, and public schools permit the formation of clubs, including those of a religious nature.

Minority religious groups have complained of discrimination in the allocation of government land for religious sites. Protestant groups occasionally complain that local officials discriminate against them when seeking land for churches and cemeteries. Evangelical leaders have complained that because they are perceived as "newcomers" they remain at a disadvantage compared with the EOC and the Supreme Islamic Council when it comes to the allocation of land. The Supreme Islamic Council has complained that it has more difficulty obtaining land from the govern-

ment bureaucracy than the EOC. Jehovah's Witnesses have stated that due to the lack of good donated plots in the capital, they have purchased their own.

In January 1998, the Government returned evangelical church property that was seized under the Mengistu regime (including the Mekane Yesus Church headquarters, which served as Federal Police headquarters until 1997); however, the Government still has not returned other properties to the Mekane Yesus Church, including three student hostels and two schools. The Government also has not returned to the Seventh-Day Adventists properties taken by the prior regime, including two hospitals. The Supreme Islamic Council continued to try to obtain properties that were confiscated outside of the capital under the Derg regime.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

On January 19, 2001, in Harar, a riot broke out between Muslims and Christians (see Section III); the army was called in to restore order and reportedly shot and killed five persons. Authorities detained 14 persons during the incident, and at the end of the period covered by this report, 194 persons were being held in detention on charges of participating in mob activity resulting in the destruction of property, inflicting bodily harm, and disturbing the peace; their cases were pending before the court. No action was taken against any of the army officers who were involved in the incident.

In December 2000, Samson Seyoum Kebede, the former editor of GOH, fled the country. In 1999 Seyoum was convicted on charges of incitement to war and attempting to spread Islamic fundamentalism; he was sentenced to 4½ years' imprisonment, but was released pending an appeal of his conviction. Under the Press Law, it is a crime to incite one religion against another.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Despite the country's broad level of religious freedom and tolerance for established faiths, there were instances of open conflict among religious groups before 1998, most noticeably between Ethiopian Orthodox Christians on the one hand, and Pentecostals and evangelicals on the other, and there continued to be pockets of interreligious tension and criticism during the period covered by this report. Newer faiths such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals have encountered overt opposition from the public. Muslims and Orthodox Christians complain about proselytization by Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses. Ethiopian Orthodox leaders complain that sometimes Protestants fail to respect Orthodox holy days and Orthodox customs. Muslims complain that some Pentecostal preachers disparage Islam in their services. There were complaints by Muslim leaders that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's desire to "show supremacy" sometimes caused irritation in the regions. In previous years, Orthodox and evangelical adherents attempted on a few occasions to prevent the construction of Protestant and Pentecostal churches in predominately Orthodox or evangelical areas; however, there were no such cases reported during the period covered by this report.

On January 19, 2001, in Harar, a riot broke out between Muslims and Christians after several members of a Christian procession entered a mosque and disrupted Muslim services. Both groups accused each other of destroying religious property. After the local police were no longer able to control the rioting, the army was called in to restore order and reportedly shot and killed five persons; it is not known whether the rioters fired weapons in return. In January and February 2001, the EOC and the Supreme Islamic Council worked together and with local, regional, and national level government representatives in Harar to restore relations between the two faiths.

Although in the previous year there were credible reports that the bodies of non-Orthodox Christians had been disinterred from Orthodox cemeteries and left exposed outside the cemetery grounds, there were no such complaints in the period covered by this report.

In most sections of the country Orthodox Christians and Muslims participate in each other's religious observances, and there is tolerance for intermarriage and conversion in certain areas, most notably in Welo, as well as in urban areas throughout the country. In the capital, Addis Ababa, persons of different faiths often live side-by-side. Most urban areas reflect a mixture of all religious denominations. Long-standing evangelical Protestant denominations, particularly the Mekane Yesus

Church and Kale Hiwot Churches, provide social services such as health care and education to nonmembers as well as to members.

In July 2000, the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the chairman of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, the Archbishop of the Ethiopian Church and the president of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus met with their Eritrean counterparts and issued a joint statement appealing for peace and reconciliation between the two countries. The two groups of religious leaders have also met subsequently to continue their work on this issue.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The U.S. Embassy meets regularly with the leaders of all of the religious communities. Embassy officers made an active effort to visit all of the religious groups and religious NGO's during the period covered by this report. Embassy officers met with the Supreme Islamic Council, Sim-Serving in Mission, Mekane Yesus, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Catholic Church, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church during the period covered by this report.

The U.S. Ambassador continued to hold regular meetings with religious leaders, including the Ethiopian Orthodox Patriarch and the president of the Supreme Islamic Council to discuss their responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Ambassador also met with the Vatican Papal Nuncio, the executive director of the Mekane Yesus Church, the director of Sim-Serving in Mission, and the president of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church to discuss the status of religious freedom and development issues. The U.S. Ambassador remains in regular contact with the American Joint Distribution Committee to discuss the situation of the country's Jewish population.

In 1998 the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) entered into a 5-year agreement with the Ethiopian Orthodox Development Assistance Authority to provide food commodities and grants to support food security programs in four areas. The value of the program during the period covered by this report was approximately \$4,043,000.

In August 1999, USAID signed an agreement with the EOC, and during the period covered by this report, gave \$195,370 to the EOC to support programs to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS. The development section of Mekane Yesus Church has been a USAID contractor since 1996. During the period covered by this report, USAID donated \$264,341 to Mekane Yesus for family planning programs. In May 2000, USAID awarded the Ethiopian Moslem Development Agency a grant to support programs to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS, and donated \$150,151 to the organization for this purpose during the period covered by this report.

GABON

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 103,347 square miles and its population is 1,225,000. Major religions practiced in the country include Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism), Islam, and traditional indigenous religions. Government statistics indicate that approximately 60 percent of the country's citizens practice Christianity, almost 40 percent practice traditional indigenous religions, and only 1 percent practice Islam. However, Muslims make up a much larger proportion of the total population, especially among noncitizens. Many persons practice both elements of Christianity and elements of traditional indigenous religions. It is estimated that approximately 73 percent of the population practice at least some elements of Christianity, about 12 percent practice Islam, about 10 percent practice traditional indigenous religions exclusively, and about 5 percent practice no religion or are atheists.

Noncitizens constitute approximately 20 percent of the population. A significant portion of these noncitizens come from countries in West Africa with large Muslim populations. Approximately 80 to 90 percent of the 12 percent of the total population who practice Islam are foreigners. However, the country's President is a member of the Muslim minority.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. A 1983 decree banning Jehovah's Witnesses, which the Government promulgated on the grounds that Jehovah's Witnesses allegedly do not protect adequately individuals who might dissent from the group's views, remained in effect; however, the Government did not enforce the ban.

The Ministry of the Interior maintains an official registry of some religious groups; however, it does not register traditional religious groups. The Government does not require religious groups to register but recommends that they do so in order to assemble with full constitutional protection. No financial or tax benefit is conferred by registration.

Islamic, Catholic, and Protestant denominations operate primary and secondary schools in the country. These schools are required to register with the Ministry of Education, which is charged with ensuring that these religious schools meet the same standards required for public schools. The Government does not contribute funds to private schools, whether religious or secular.

Both Catholic and Protestant radio stations broadcast in the country.

The Government promotes interfaith relations by facilitating meetings of leaders of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy and the Islamic Council. Such meetings are held periodically, usually once every year or every other year.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government has refused to register approximately 10 religious groups, including Jehovah's Witnesses. In practice the Government allows Jehovah's Witnesses to assemble and practice their religion. In addition the Government has made uncorroborated claims that it permitted Jehovah's Witnesses to proselytize.

Some Protestants alleged that the government television station accorded free transmission time to the Catholic Church but not to minority religious groups. Others alleged that the armed forces favor Roman Catholics and Muslims in hiring and promotion. Some Protestant pastors allege that local officials discriminate against them by making it difficult to obtain building permits to construct churches.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the different religions are amicable. There were no reports of interreligious violence or intrareligious incidents during the period covered by this report.

There were occasional incidents of violence in which practitioners of some traditional indigenous religions inflicted bodily harm on other persons; however, the details of these incidents were uncertain. The Ministry of the Interior maintained that violence and bodily harm to others in the practice of a traditional religion is a criminal offense and is prosecuted vigorously. Media reports suggested that this was true; however, little information about such prosecutions or their results was available.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Embassy officials have met with leaders of the Catholic Church, as well as the Islamic Superior Council. Contacts are maintained with the Ministry of Interior to discuss the general state of religion in the country. The Embassy also maintains close contacts with various Christian missionary groups in the country.

THE GAMBIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

Government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion during the period covered by this report, and the Government amicably resolved the dispute regarding the imam of the Brikama mosque.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 3,861 square miles, and its population is 1,367,124. Muslims constitute over 90 percent of the population. The main Muslim branches are Tijaniyah, Qadiriya, Muridiyah, and Ahmadiyah. Except for the Ahmadiyah, all branches pray together at common mosques. An estimated 9 percent of the population practice Christianity and 1 percent practice traditional indigenous religions. The Christian community is predominantly Roman Catholic; there also are several Protestant denominations, including Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and various small Protestant evangelical denominations. There is no information available regarding the number of atheists in the country.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The Government does not require religious groups to register. Religiously based nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) are subject to the same registration and licensing requirements as other NGO's.

In December 2000 and January 2001, after President Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh reportedly mentioned the issue of Shari'a during a meeting with religious leaders, religious leaders, political figures, and the public engaged in a series of discussions and radio and newspaper editorials about the merits of Shari'a law. In response to these deliberations, the government announced that it had no intention of implementing Shari'a law.

The Government permits and does not limit religious instruction in schools. Bible and Koranic studies are provided in both public and private schools throughout the country without Government restriction or interference. Religious instruction in public schools is provided at government expense, but is not mandatory.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

The Government's dispute with the imam of Brikama mosque ended amicably. In May 1998, the imam of the largest mosque in Brikama was arrested together with a leading opposition party politician and eight others in a dispute over minor construction work at a mosque that reportedly was financed by supporters of the ruling party. In February 1999, the High Court acquitted all of the defendants of destruction of property and discharged the case. However, the Government filed an appeal in the High Court for the imam and three others to be retried. The imam's lawyer filed a writ of summons in the High Court, which ruled that it had no jurisdiction over the matter and referred the case to a district tribunal. Subsequently, the case was filed at the Court of Appeal, but the case was adjourned until April 2001. In April 2001, the Government dropped its appeal of the High Court's decision to let the imam resume leading prayers, and the imam was reinstated fully at that time.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are generally amicable relations between the various religious communities. Inter-marriage between members of different religious groups is legal and socially acceptable.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting of human rights.

GHANA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there are some limits on this right.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. In October 2000, government officials, including police, supported the forced polio vaccination of children in a local church. The Government does not always prosecute those responsible for religious violence.

Tension persists between a segment of the Christian community and traditional authorities over the annual ban on drumming in the ethnic Ga traditional area. An agreement reached in 2000 between local churches and Ga leaders to prevent violence was not adhered to in 2001; as a result, there were sporadic clashes between church members and Ga youth. The country's legal code prohibits ritual or customary servitude; however, *Trokosi*, a form of religious indoctrination and forced servitude, exists on a limited scale.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The U.S. Embassy has supported civil society efforts to address religious freedom issues.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of approximately 92,000 square miles, and its population is 19.5 million. Approximately 40 percent of the country's population are at least nominally Christian. Approximately 30 percent of the population adhere to traditional indigenous religions or other religions. Approximately 25 percent of the population are Muslim. Other religions include the Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Ninchiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai, Sri Sathya Sai Baba Sera, Sat Sang, Eckanker, the Divine Light Mission, Hare Krishna, Rastafarianism, and other international faiths, as well as some separatist or spiritual churches or cults, which include elements of Christianity and traditional beliefs such as magic and divination. *Zetahil*, a small practice unique to Ghana, combines elements of Christianity and Islam. Some consider the ethnic Ga tradition to be a religion. There are no statistics available for the percentage of atheists in the country. Atheism, as such, does not have a strong presence, as most persons have some spiritual and traditional beliefs.

Christian denominations include Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Mennonite, Evangelical Presbyterian, Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal Zionist, Christian Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, F'eden, numerous charismatic faiths, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Seventh-Day Adventist, Pentecostal, Baptist, and the Society of Friends. Christianity often includes an overlay of traditional beliefs. Reportedly, only 1.9 million of those persons who profess the Christian faith actually attend church. However, this figure appears to be lower than the actual number of persons who attend services.

Traditional indigenous religions include a belief in a supreme being, referred to by the Akan ethnic group as *Nyame* or by the Ewe ethnic group as *Mawu*, and lesser gods who act as intermediaries between the supreme being and man on earth. Veneration of ancestors also is a characteristic of traditional indigenous religions because ancestors also provide a link between the supreme being and the living and may be reincarnated at times. The religious leaders of those sharing these diverse beliefs commonly are referred to as priests and are trained in the arts of healing and divination. These priests typically operate shrines to the supreme deity or to one of the lesser gods, relying upon the donations of the public to maintain the shrine and for their own maintenance. One known group, *Afrikania*, also known as the *Afrikan Renaissance Mission (ARM)*, actively supports what it claims to be traditional religious practices. *Afrikania* often criticizes the Government, foreign diplomatic missions, and nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) for corrupting tradi-

tional values and imposing foreign religious beliefs. It is not known how much support there is for Afrikania or how many members it has.

Three principal branches of Islam are represented in the country: the orthodox Sunnis and Tijanis, and the less orthodox Ahmadis. The Shi'a branch virtually is absent from the country's Islamic community.

The majority of the Muslim population is concentrated in the urban centers of Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, and Wa. The majority of the followers of more traditional religions mainly reside in the rural areas of the country. Christians live throughout the country.

Religions considered to be "foreign" include the Baha'i Faith, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Ninchiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai, Sri Sathya Sai Baba Sera, Sat Sang, Eckanker, the Divine Light Mission, Hare Krishna, and Rastafarianism.

Foreign missionary groups operate freely in the country, including Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Mormon groups.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there are some limits on this right.

Religious institutions that wish to have formal government recognition are required to register with the Registrar General's Department. This is a formality only, and there were no reports that the Government denied registration to any group. Most traditional religions, with the exception of the Afrikania Mission, do not register. Formally recognized religions are exempt from paying taxes on ecclesiastical, charitable, and educational activities that do not generate income from trade or business; however, religious organizations are required to pay taxes on business activities that generate income.

Government employees, including the President, are required to swear an oath upon taking office; however, this oath can be either religious or secular, depending on the wishes of the person taking the oath.

Foreign missionary groups operated in the country with a minimum of formal requirements and without restrictions.

The Government took some steps to promote interfaith understanding. At government meetings and receptions there is usually a multid denominational invocation. Often religious leaders from various faiths are present. In June 2001, Parliament formed a joint committee to address problems surrounding the annual ban on drumming in the Ga traditional area prior to the Homowo Festival (see Section III).

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government does not always prosecute those responsible for religiously motivated attacks. For example, none of those who attacked churches during the 1998 or 1999 annual ban on drumming (see Section III) were arrested or charged with an offense. Police authorities stated that pursuing the cases would exacerbate religious tensions.

The Catholic Church in the archdiocese of Accra officially suspended a priest for conducting unorthodox "healing" services. His superiors called his actions a failure to comply with his vows of obedience and a lack of responsibility and respect toward his superiors—especially the Bishop. In August 1999, when the accused priest was conducting one of these healing services, the gates to the cathedral were locked, and police personnel prevented worshipers from entering the church premises. In April 2000, church authorities removed the priest from the parish after conducting an internal investigation.

The Government requires that all students in public schools up to the equivalent of senior secondary school level attend a daily "assembly" or devotional service; however, in practice this regulation is not always enforced. This is a Christian service and includes the recital of The Lord's Prayer, a Bible reading, and a blessing. Students at the senior secondary school level are required to attend a similar assembly three times a week. Students attending government-administered boarding school are required to attend a non-denominational service on Sundays. However, in September 2000, officials from the Ministry of Education met with the Ghana Muslim Students' Association (GMSA) to discuss a petition concerning acts of discrimination against Muslims in some institutional organizations. Following the meeting, the Director General of the Ghana Education Service announced new regulations for all public educational institutions, including the stipulation that students of minority ethnic groups should not be forced by school authorities to worship with the majority religious groups in school; however, the regulations were not finalized or published by the end of the period covered by this report. Afrikania also publicly has

urged the Government to stop requiring Christian “indoctrination” of children in all government-funded schools.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

On October 5, 2000, a government medical team, assisted by the police, forcibly immunized approximately 40 children from the First Century Gospel Church (Faith) in Jamestown, Accra, against poliomyelitis. When church members resisted the team’s attempts to conduct the immunizations, police arrested seven persons, including the church’s pastor. Church doctrine does not allow the administration of modern medicine to its members, and according to local reports, health teams had been prevented from immunizing the children for several years. Reports indicated that the local community supported the immunizations as being in the greater national interest.

Belief in witchcraft is still strong in many parts of the country. Rural women can be banished by traditional village authorities or their families for suspected witchcraft. Most accused witches are older women, often widows, who are identified by fellow villagers as the cause of difficulties, such as illness, crop failure, or financial misfortune. Many of these banished women go to live in “witchcamps,” villages in the north populated by suspected witches. The women do not face formal legal sanction if they return home; however, most fear that they may be beaten or lynched if they return to their villages. In the past, there were reports that forced labor occurred in witchcamps; however, there were no such reports during the period covered by this report. Legislation passed in 1998 provides protection to alleged witches. In the past, human rights NGO’s estimated that the number of occupants of the witches’ camp was growing; however, there are no definitive statistics on the number of women living in northern witchcamps, and international and domestic observers estimate that there are fewer than 850 women in the camps. The CHRAJ and human rights NGO’s have mounted a campaign to end this traditional practice, but have met with little success. Various organizations provide food, medical care, and other forms of support to the residents of the camp.

In addition to banishment, suspected witches are subject to violence and lynching. For example, in April 2001, a man living in Tongor in the Volta Region chopped off the hands of a 75-year-old aunt, claiming that she was a witch. Police arrested the assailant, but there were no further developments in the case by the end of the period covered by this report.

In August 2000, an 80-year-old woman in the Volta region was brought before a community tribunal when a local teacher accused her of being a witch. In his statement to the tribunal, the teacher said his bank account was out of money, animals had been eating the produce on his farm, and he recently had become impotent, all of which he attributed to witchcraft on the part of the woman. The tribunal ruled that the woman had to compensate the teacher with a portion of rum, a pot of palm wine, and \$6 (2,000 cedis). In April 2001, the local press reported that the woman took the case to the CHRAJ and filed a suit in circuit court against the tribunal members and the teacher, claiming that the accusation of witchcraft and subsequent tribunal hearing subjected her to slander and public humiliation. There were no further developments in the case during the period covered by this report.

Although the country’s legal code prohibits ritual or customary servitude, Trokosi, a form of religious indoctrination and forced servitude, exists on a limited scale. In June 1998, Parliament passed, and the President signed, comprehensive legislation to protect women and children’s rights that included a ban on ritual servitude, which many activists interpreted to include Trokosi. According to human rights groups, such as International Needs, that have been campaigning against Trokosi for years, the practice has decreased in recent years because other belief systems have gained followers, and fetish priests who die have not been replaced (see Section III). Reports on the number of women and girls bound to various Trokosi shrines vary; according to some reports, there are more than 2,000 women or girls in Trokosi shrines, but according to other international observers, shrines generally have 4 or fewer girls serving them at any time, and there are no more than 100 girls serving at Trokosi shrines throughout the Volta Region.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government’s refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are generally amicable relations between the various religious communities, and spokesmen for these communities often advocate tolerance toward different religions; however, there was some tension among some religious groups. Public debate continued over religious worship versus traditional practices and respect for the rights and customs of others in a diverse society.

During the period covered by this report, there was continued tension between practitioners of the ethnic Ga tradition (the Ga are the original inhabitants of Accra, and some consider the Ga tradition to be a religion) and members of some charismatic churches over the annual ban by Ga traditional leaders on drumming and noise-making prior to the Ga "Homowo" (harvest) festival. Traditionalists believe that their time-honored beliefs should be accorded due respect, while some Christians resent the imposition of bans, which they believe infringes on their right to worship as they please. In April 2000, religious and traditional leaders agreed to modify the ban, requiring drumming to be subdued and confined to the churches. However, on August 20, 2000, youth in Teshie (Greater Accra Region) attacked the Open Heaven Mission International Church, seized drums and injured six worshippers.

On May 7, 2001, the first day of the ban, the Ga Traditional Council (GTC) announced that the agreement it had reached with local churches in 2000 was not applicable for 2001 and that the ban would apply to all drumming and noise-making. Christian churches countered that the ban was unconstitutional and that they would not observe it. Several incidents of violence were reported during the 2001 ban on drumming. On May 13, 2001, groups of young men attacked and damaged two charismatic churches, resulting in a number of injuries. On May 20, 2001, the second Sunday of the ban, groups of young men attacked additional charismatic churches and stole musical equipment and money. On May 23, 2001, the Forum of Religious Bodies in Ghana issued a statement, which was signed by seven religious councils, calling for peaceful coexistence and further negotiation with the GTC; however, a GTC leader stated that no agreement had been reached with the churches, and that he did not endorse any compromise. Although no agreement was reached, there were no reports of violence during the final two Sundays of the ban.

There were occasional reports of interreligious and intrareligious incidents but no violent incidents based on religious affiliation. There were no reports of intra-Muslim violence during the period covered by this report. On July 21, 2000, three Muslims were injured at Effiduase (Eastern Region) in a clash between two Muslim sects over doctrinal differences. Members of the Tijanniya school of Islam allegedly attacked members of the Al-Sunna school. The cases of those arrested following intra-Muslim clashes in Wenchi and Kumasi in 1998 were pending with the attorney general at the end of the period covered by this report.

Although the country's legal code prohibits ritual or customary servitude, Trokosi, a form of religious indoctrination and forced servitude that involves a period of servitude lasting up to 3 years, exists on a very limited scale. Trokosi, a traditional religious practice found primarily among the Ewe ethnic group in the Volta region, is a system in which a virgin girl, sometimes under the age of 10, is given by her family to work and be trained in traditional religion at a fetish shrine for up to 3 years as a means of atonement for a serious crime, such as rape or murder, allegedly committed by a member of the girl's family. In exceptional cases, when a girl of suitable age or status is unavailable, a boy can be offered. The girl becomes the property of the shrine god and the charge of the shrine priest for the duration of her stay. As a charge of the priest, the girl works in the shrine, which may include work on the shrine's farm, and undergoes instruction in the traditional indigenous religion. In the past, there were reports that the girls were the sexual property of the priests; however, while instances of abuse may occur on a case-by-case basis, there is no evidence that sexual or physical abuse is an ingrained or systematic part of the practice. The girl's family must provide for the girl's needs during her stay, including food and clothing; however, in some cases families are unable to do so. After the girl has completed her service to the shrine, her family can obtain her release by providing items or money to the shrine for a final ritual. In occasional cases, the family abandons the girl or cannot afford the costs of the final rites, in which case the girl remains at the shrine indefinitely. Even when freed from the shrine, a Trokosi woman generally has few marketable skills and, depending on the customs of her village, may have difficulty getting married. In some instances, when a Trokosi woman dies, her family may replace her with another young girl, thus continuing the association of the family to the shrine from generation to generation. In the past, there were reports that more than 2,000 women and girls were bound to various Trokosi shrines; however, according to domestic and international observ-

ers, shrines generally have 4 or fewer girls serving them at any time, and there are no more than 100 girls serving at Trokosi shrines throughout the Volta Region.

In June 1998, Parliament passed, and the President signed, comprehensive legislation to protect women and children's rights that included a ban on ritual servitude, which many activists interpreted to include Trokosi. According to human rights groups, such as International Needs, that have been campaigning against Trokosi for years, the practice has decreased in recent years because other belief systems have gained followers, and fetish priests who die have not been replaced. Adherents of Trokosi describe it as a practice based on traditional African religious beliefs; however, the Government does not recognize it as a religion.

On January 25, 2001, members of the Christo Asafo Christian church clashed with members of the Boade Baaka traditional shrine at Taifa, greater Accra region. The dispute arose days earlier after shrine members accused a Christian woman of witchcraft. In the process, the woman was injured slightly and a crowd formed. Christo Asafo members attacked the shrine in retaliation. There were some minor injuries. Police did not arrest or prosecute any of the participants, but they continued to investigate the incident during the period covered by this report.

The clergy and other religious leaders actively discourage religiously motivated violence, discrimination, or harassment.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy monitors religious freedom in the country and discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

Embassy officers meet periodically with various leaders of religious and traditional communities in the country. In May and July 2001, Embassy officials met with the leadership of the Afrikania (traditionalist) religion in order to learn about their views on religious freedom in the country. The Afrikania leaders expressed gratitude for the visit and noted that the U.S. Embassy was the first foreign mission to meet with them.

The U.S. Embassy supported dialog between religious leaders and civil society. In February 2001, the U.S. Ambassador and the new Greater Accra Regional Minister discussed the conflict over the annual ban on drumming between the Ga community and local charismatic churches. The Ambassador urged the new administration to take an active role in preventing violence in 2001, as the previous regional administration had done in 2000.

GUINEA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion; however, the Government reportedly favors Muslims over non-Muslims.

Relations between the various religions are generally amicable; however, in some areas, strong social pressure discourages non-Muslims from practicing their religion openly, and the Government tends to defer to local Muslim sensibilities.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 94,926 square miles, and its population is 7,164,823. Islam is demographically, socially, and culturally the dominant religion. According to credible estimates, some 85 percent of the population adheres to Islam, 10 percent follow various Christian faiths, and 5 percent hold traditional indigenous beliefs. Muslims in the country generally adhere to the Sunni branch of Islam; adherents of the Shi'a branch remain relatively few, although they are increasing in number. Among the Christian groups, there are Roman Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventist, and other Christian evangelical churches active in the country and recognized by the Government. There is a small Baha'i community. There are small numbers of Hindus, Buddhists, and practitioners of traditional Chinese religions among the expatriate community. Few, if any, citizens profess atheism.

Geographically, Muslims are a majority in all four major regions. Christians are most numerous in the capital, in lower Guinea, and in the forest region. Christians are found in all large towns throughout the country, with the exception of the Fouta Jallon region of middle Guinea, where the Puhlar (or Fulani or Peuhl) ethnic group opposes the establishment of religious communities other than Islamic ones. Traditional indigenous religions are most prevalent in the forest region.

No data is available on active participation in formal religious services or rituals; however, the National Islamic League estimates that 70 percent of Muslims practice their faith regularly.

Although there are no known organized heterogeneous or syncretistic religious communities, both Islam and Christianity have developed syncretistic tendencies, which reflect the continuing influence and acceptability of traditional indigenous beliefs and rituals.

The country's large immigrant and refugee populations generally practice the same faiths as citizens, although those from neighboring Liberia and Sierra Leone have higher percentages of Christians and adherents of traditional indigenous religions.

Foreign missionary groups are active in the country and include Roman Catholic, Philafricaine, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, and many American missionary societies.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The Government requires that all recognized Christian churches join the Association of Churches and Missions in order to benefit from certain government privileges such as tax benefits and energy subsidies.

A government-sponsored organization, the National Islamic League (NIL), represents the country's Sunni Muslim majority, which comprises some 85 percent of the population. The National Islamic League's stated policy is to promote better relations with other religious denominations and dialog aimed at ameliorating inter-ethnic and interreligious tensions. Although the Government and the NIL have spoken out against the proliferation of Shi'a fundamentalist groups on the grounds that they "generate confusion and deviation" within the country's Islamic family, they have not restricted the religious activities of these groups.

The small Baha'i community practices its faith openly and freely, although it is not officially recognized; however, it is unknown whether the community has asked for official recognition.

Missionary groups are required to make a declaration of their aims and activities to the Ministry of Interior or to the National Islamic League. With rare exceptions, foreign missionary groups and church-affiliated relief agencies operate freely in the country. There were no reports during the period covered by this report that government officials obstructed or limited missionary activities by Jehovah's Witnesses.

There were no reports that the Government required government ministers to take an oath on either the Koran or the Bible, a requirement that provoked criticism when it was imposed—apparently for the only time—in April 1999.

Both Muslim and Christian holidays are recognized by the Government and celebrated by the population.

The government-controlled official press reports on religious events involving both Islamic and Christian groups.

The Government does not have a specific program to promote interfaith understanding; however, the Government utilizes all religious groups in its civic education efforts and national prayers for peace.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government support of the powerful, semi-official National Islamic League has led some non-Muslims to complain that the Government uses its influence to favor Muslims over non-Muslims, although non-Muslims are represented in the Cabinet, administrative bureaucracy, and the armed forces. Conversions of senior officials to Islam, such as the Defense Minister, are ascribed to the NIL's efforts to influence the religious beliefs of senior government leaders. The Government refrains from appointing non-Muslims to important administrative positions in certain parts of the country, in deference to the particularly strong social dominance of Islam in these regions. In July 2000, the Government announced that it would finance the renova-

tion of Conakry's grand mosque, the mosque at which President Conte practices; however, no action was taken during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the various religions are generally amicable; however, in some parts of the country, Islam's dominance is such that there is strong social pressure that discourages non-Muslims from practicing their religion openly.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy maintains contact with clergy and religious leaders from all major religious communities, monitors developments affecting religious freedom, and discusses religious freedom issues with government officials in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

GUINEA-BISSAU

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 10,811 square miles and its population is 1,285,715. Approximately half the population follows traditional indigenous religious practices. Approximately 45 percent of the population are Muslim and about 5 percent are Christian. There are few atheists.

Christians belong to a number of groups, including the Roman Catholic Church and various Protestant denominations. The Muslim population is concentrated in the Fula and Mandinka ethnic groups, and Muslims generally live in the north and northeast. Christians are concentrated in Bissau and other large towns. Practitioners of traditional religions inhabit the remainder of the country.

Missionaries from numerous Christian denominations have long been active.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The Government requires that religious groups be licensed; however, no applications have been refused. There were no reports that new applications were made during the period covered by this report.

All religions were tolerated prior to the outbreak of civil conflict in June 1998, and there have been no reports of discrimination based on religious belief since that time. Historically political affiliation has not been related directly to ethnic or religious affiliation. Members of all major faiths are represented in the Interim Government that was inaugurated in February 1999, in the National Assembly.

Numerous foreign missionary groups operate in the country without restriction. While many missionaries left following the June 1998 conflict, others stayed and continue to operate unmolested.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the various religious communities are generally amicable. Society is tolerant on religious matters.

There have been no reports of significant ecumenical movements or activities to promote greater mutual understanding and tolerance.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

There has been no official U.S. presence in the country since June 1998;¹ however, the U.S. Embassy based in Dakar, Senegal, discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the overall context of the promotion of human rights.

KENYA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, while groups generally were allowed to worship freely, the Government at times interfered with other activities by religious groups.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. The Government at times restricted or disrupted public meetings that religious groups organized or participated in, primarily for political reasons. Muslim leaders charge that the Government is hostile towards Muslims.

There generally is a great level of tolerance among religious groups; however, there were a few instances of violence between Christian and Muslim groups, and Muslims continued to perceive themselves to be treated as second-class citizens in a predominantly Christian country. There are some interfaith movements and political alliances, including the Ufungamano Initiative on constitutional reform, which was led jointly by Christian, Muslim, and Hindu leaders.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of approximately 225,000 square miles and its population is approximately 29 million, of which approximately 88 percent live in rural areas. According to rough estimates, Protestants are the largest religious group representing approximately 38 percent of the population. Approximately 28 percent of the population are Roman Catholic, while an estimated 10 to 20 percent are Muslim. Hinduism is practiced by 1 percent of the population, and the remainder follow various traditional indigenous religions or offshoots of Christian religions. There are very few atheists.

Members of most religious groups are active throughout the country. Muslims are concentrated chiefly in the coastal areas and the north and northeastern parts of the country. Muslims also are present in significant numbers in urban centers throughout the country.

Foreign missionary groups of many faiths operate in the country.

Certain religions dominate in particular regions of the country. For example, the Northeast Province is vastly Muslim; the Eastern Province is approximately 50 percent Muslim (mostly in the north) and 50 percent Christian (mostly in the south); and the Coast Province almost entirely is Muslim, except for the western areas of

¹Note: The U.S. Embassy remains closed following suspension of operations on June 14, 1998, at the outset of civil conflict that ended in May 1999. The U.S. Embassy in Dakar is responsible for U.S. interests in Guinea-Bissau. Sources of information about the situation of religious believers and other circumstances inside Guinea-Bissau are very limited.

the province, which predominantly are Christian. The rest of the country largely is Christian, with some persons practicing traditional indigenous religions.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, while groups generally were allowed to worship freely, the Government at times interfered with other activities by religious groups.

The Government requires new religious organizations to register with the Registrar of Societies, which reports to the Office of the Attorney General. The Government allows traditional indigenous religious organizations to register, although many choose not to do so. Once registered religious organizations enjoy tax-free status, and clergy are not subject to duty on purchased goods. Religious organizations generally receive equal treatment from the Government; however, some small splinter groups have found it difficult to register due to their inability to define their status as more than an offshoot of a larger religious organization. The Government has not granted registration to the Tent of the Living God, a small Kikuyu religious order banned during the single-party era (pre-1992). However, with the arrival of a multiparty system in 1992, the Tent of the Living God virtually has disappeared.

Foreign missionary groups of various faiths operate in the country, and the Government generally has permitted their assistance to the poor and their founding of schools and hospitals. The missionaries openly promote their religious beliefs and have encountered little resistance.

In 1998 the Ministry of Information, Transport, and Communication approved radio and television broadcast licenses for a Muslim group and for a Christian group. In 1999 the Ministry licensed an Islamic radio station and three Catholic television stations. The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) operates the Muslim Iqra Radio Station, which provides information, educational programming, and entertainment for Muslim audiences in Nairobi and began broadcasting in July 2000. At the end of 2000, the Catholic Church had been assigned regional broadcasting frequencies, but not national frequencies; its petition for national frequencies was not resolved by the end of the period covered by this report.

In the areas of the country that largely are Christian, there are morning prayers in public schools. All children participate in the assembly but are not punished if they remain silent during prayers.

The Government and some churches frequently disagree over school management when both the Government and the church have a stake in the school. Often churches provide the land and the buildings for the schools, and the Government provides the teachers, which has led to disputes over school management, and sometimes led to the closing of schools.

The Government celebrates several national holidays that also are religious holidays, including Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Idd-ul-Fitr, Idd-ul-Azha, and Diwali.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In May 2001, Muslims protested the reported allocation of a public plot of land to a private developer in Mombassa. The grounds traditionally have been used for celebrating Islamic events. Following the protests, the Government apparently has ceased developing plans to allocate the land, and the land remained public as of the end of the period covered by this report.

The Minister of Trade and Industry Nicholas Biwott has been engaged in a public dispute with the Catholic Church over an intended project to use public land to create an educational facility to be named after the Minister's mother. Father Michael Rop, who is in charge of the local parish where the facility is proposed, protested the appropriation of public land to honor the Minister's mother. The dispute escalated when the Eldoret Bishop, Cornelius Korir, accused the Minister of harassing Father Rop and his supporters, and claimed that the Minister was persecuting the church and its followers. The dispute was ongoing at the end of the period covered by this report.

In April 2001, the High Court allowed the Buru Buru Church of God in Nairobi to reopen. Fighting between rival factions in the Church, which led to numerous injuries among worshipers, had prompted local authorities to block entry to the church on June 25, 2000, in an apparent effort to prevent renewed fighting.

In April 2000, William Ruto, Assistant Minister in the Office of the President, speaking after the discovery of "cult" killings in Uganda, was quoted as saying that the Government would crack down on religious groups that endanger the safety of

their adherents; however, there was no reported harassment of religious groups, and no action was taken by the end of the period covered by this report.

Political parties must register with the Government. Despite 1997 reforms and the subsequent registration of a large number of political parties, the Government has refused to reverse its 1994 denial of registration of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) on the grounds that the IPK had been involved in a number of violent confrontations with police in 1992.

Muslim leaders have charged that the Government is hostile toward Muslims. Muslims complain that non-Muslims receive better treatment when requesting citizenship documents. According to Muslim leaders, government authorities more rigorously scrutinize the identification cards of persons with Muslim surnames and require them to present additional documentation of their citizenship, such as birth certificates of parents and, sometimes, grandparents. The Government has singled out the overwhelmingly Muslim ethnic Somalis as the only group whose members are issued and required to carry an additional form of identification to prove that they are citizens. They must produce upon demand their Kenyan identification card and a second identification card verifying screening. Both cards also are required to apply for a passport. This heightened scrutiny appears to be due to an attempt to deter illegal immigration, rather than to the religious affiliation of the ethnic Somalis. Muslim leaders claim that since the August 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, government discrimination against their community has worsened.

In the past, the misuse of authority by mainly Christian security forces in the northeast, which largely is Muslim and in which banditry is widespread, had contributed to Muslim mistrust. However, during the period covered by this report, there has been greater inclusion of Muslims in security forces and provincial administration; for example, a Muslim was appointed Provincial Commissioner in the Northeast Province.

Practicing witchcraft reportedly is a criminal offense under colonial-era laws; however, persons generally are prosecuted for this offense only in conjunction with some other offense, such as murder. Witchcraft traditionally has been a common explanation for diseases for which the causes were unknown. The practice of witchcraft is understood widely to encompass attempts to harm others not only by magic, but also by covert means of established efficacy such as poisons. Although many traditional indigenous religions include or accommodate belief in the efficacy of witchcraft, they generally approve of harmful witchcraft only for defensive or retaliatory purposes and purport to offer protection against it.

In August 1999, the Government presented to Parliament and thereby effectively published the 1994 widely-publicized report of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Devil Worship. President Moi appointed the Commission in 1994 in response to public concern about a perceived resurgence of witchcraft, ritual murders, and other ostensibly "Satanic" practices associated with aspects of traditional indigenous religions. The Commission's report included numerous reports of ritual murder, human sacrifice, cannibalism, and feats of magic allegedly done by using powers acquired through such acts. It also reported that "Satanists" had infiltrated non-indigenous religious groups and other organizations, making them "doorways" to Satanism. The Commission is no longer functioning, and the Government took no action to follow up on the report.

In December 1999, a group of Christian, Muslim, and Hindu leaders formed an alternative process to reform the Constitution, the Ufungamano Initiative, which rivaled the Parliament-led process. The Government, although critical of the Ufungamano group, permitted it to proceed with its constitutional review process. In May 2001, after many months of negotiations, the Ufungamano process merged with the parliamentary process. The newly-created Constitutional Review Commission began work during the period covered by this report.

In September 1999, President Moi was quoted as saying that, for political reasons, he would not allow the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama, to enter the country.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

On March 30, 2001, four armed men carjacked Geoffrey Ngoima Mbugua, a minister at the Presbyterian Church of East Africa's (PCEA) Thika parish and lecturer at St. Paul's Theological Seminary. Police officers pursued the vehicle; when the armed men began shooting at the police, the police shot at the vehicle, killing Mbugua; the perpetrators escaped. No investigation into the case had occurred by the end of the period covered by this report, and it is unlikely that an investigation will be undertaken; the killing was considered to have taken place while the officers' were discharging their duties, and it does not appear that the crime was religiously motivated.

The case of two police officers, Julius Mugambi M'Nabere and Stephan Musau Kilonzo, charged with the August 1999 murder of five Muslim worshippers in the Anas Bin Malik mosque in Chai village near Mombasa remained pending before the court at the end of the period covered by this report.

Although the Constitution provides for freedom of assembly, at times the Government used sections of the Public Order Act and the Penal Code to restrict or disrupt public meetings that religious groups organized or participated in, primarily for political reasons. In April 2000, police in Laikipia broke up a gathering in a Catholic church hall on the grounds that the participants were former freedom fighters holding a secret meeting. The police arrested four men and charged them with holding an illegal meeting; the case was pending at the end of the period covered by this report.

The Government historically has been unsympathetic to tribal religious groups that have engendered protest movements. The Government frequently harassed and periodically arrested and detained members of the Mungiki, a small, controversial, cultural and political movement based in part on Kikuyu ethnic traditions, which espouses political views and cultural practices that are controversial in mainstream Kenyan society. While religion may have played a role in the formation of the group, observers believe that it is not a key characteristic of the group. The Mungiki do not adhere to any single religion and members are free to choose their own religion; the group includes Muslims and Christians. The number of Mungiki members is unknown, but the group draws a significant following from the unemployed and other marginalized segments of society. The debate over the right of the Mungiki to practice their cultural traditions and advance their political agenda is ongoing.

There were no other reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There generally is a great level of tolerance among religious groups; however, there were a few instances of violence between adherents of different religions, and Muslims perceive themselves to be treated as second-class citizens in a predominantly Christian country. Inter-marriage between members of Christian denominations is common, and interfaith prayer services occur frequently. Inter-marriage between Muslims and Christians, although less frequent, also is acceptable socially, and mosques and Christian churches can be found on the same city blocks.

For years Muslims and Christians have held an open debate over their respective places in society. Each group claims to have a larger number of adherents than is plausible, and some Muslim groups believe that the Government and business communities deliberately have impeded development in predominantly Muslim areas. Some Muslim leaders claim that discrimination against Muslims has resulted in a greater incidence of poverty among Muslims than among other religious groups; however, there is no statistical evidence to support this claim. At times the debate has undermined mutual trust.

There were a few instances of violence between adherents of different religions. A number of incidents took place in November and December 2000, when a land dispute led to violence between Muslims and Christians in a densely populated neighborhood in Nairobi. At least one person was killed and numerous persons were injured in the riots, including Anglican Archbishop David Gitari. Two days of violent clashes resulted in the burning of several buildings, including a mosque and two churches. After the riots ended, Cabinet Minister Sharrif Nassir admitted that he had encouraged Muslim youths to retaliate when attacked. Muslim leaders apologized for the violence and clarified that the dispute originated over land and was not religiously-motivated. Following the riots, religious leaders on both sides cited police inaction as a reason for the spread of the violence.

In March 2001, Hannah Mungai, a member of the Akorino religious group (a group that mixes traditions based on the Old Testament with indigenous beliefs) left her three children with an evangelist member of the religious group while she toured western areas of the country on a preaching mission. When she returned, the pastor of the religious group returned two of the children; however, he invoked the name of the Holy Spirit and refused to return the youngest child stating that the 2-year-old girl would remain with him to serve at the altar of the church. Mungai did not report the kidnaping to the police because the religious group does not allow challenges to "men of God" once they invoke the name of the Holy Spirit; however,

she later publicized the story after pressure from her husband. Mungai claims that her daughter was given to other religious group members, and she does not know where her daughter is being kept. The matter had not been brought formally to police attention by the end of the period covered by this report.

On August 24, 2000, Father John Anthony Kaiser, a Catholic priest working in the country for over 30 years, was found dead near Naivasha town. Father Kaiser was a vocal human rights activist and a critic of key members of the Government. Although there was much public speculation to the contrary, a U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) report, released in April 2001, concluded that the evidence collected was most consistent with suicide, and that it was unlikely that Father Kaiser had been murdered. The Catholic Church has rejected the FBI report and has called for further independent investigation.

There have been reports of intolerance among refugee groups in Kenya. Somali refugees reportedly have attacked relatives who marry refugees belonging to faiths other than Islam. Somali refugees at the Dadaab camps also reportedly have attacked verbally and physically Sudanese refugee women who wear Westernized clothing considered "too revealing" under Somali standards.

There continued to be reports of ritual murders associated with aspects of traditional indigenous religious rites. The victims, generally teenage children, reportedly were killed and parts of their bodies removed for use in traditional rituals by persons seeking renewed youth or health. The report of the 1994 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Devil Worship, presented to the Parliament in August 1999, contained similar reports from recent years. In September 2000, police in Nairobi reportedly alerted residents to a growing number of ritual murders after a 7-year-old girl was found murdered. A woman was arrested 1 week earlier for allegedly abducting a child.

Occasionally mobs killed members of their communities on suspicion that they practiced witchcraft or were devil worshippers. There were several reports of the public beating "suspicious-looking" persons who were accompanied by small children. On October 3, 2000, a mob of residents of Nairobi's Kariobangi North neighborhood lynched three suspected child abductors (believed to be devil worshippers), including a grandfather who was walking with his grandchild. In late October 2000, in Kisii, police intervened to block villagers from killing seven suspected witches. Also in October 2000, the press reported that villagers burned alive a suspected sorcerer in Kimburini. In another incident, a mob attacked a group of American Missionaries in Kisumu, whom it suspected to be on a mission to abduct children.

There have been societal efforts to bridge religious divides. The Inter-Faith Peace Movement represents a broad religious spectrum, and its members include the Anglican Church of Kenya, the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims, the Muslim Consultative Council, the Methodist Church, the Catholic Church, the National Council of Churches of Kenya, the Inland African Church, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and the Hindu Council. The National Council of Churches in Kenya generally is involved in a variety of civil society initiatives, including conflict resolution.

In December 1999, a group of Christian, Muslim, and Hindu leaders formed an alternative process to reform the Constitution, the Ufungamano Initiative (see Section II). The Initiative, which originally opposed the Parliament-led process, merged with the Government-backed Parliamentary process in March 2001, and the bill that finalized the merger was passed and signed by the President in May 2001.

On November 26, 2000, in Kisumu, progovernment youths forcibly disrupted a meeting of the Ufungamano Initiative. The youths threw homemade bombs, burned a vehicle, and beat several persons severely. Police did not intervene.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy made a concerted effort to bridge the gaps that exist between Muslims and Christians. Embassy officials maintain regular contact with leaders and members of all religious communities. The Ambassador and other embassy officers met with Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim leaders while traveling. The Ambassador regularly hosts meetings with religious leaders to discuss issues affecting their communities. In May 2001, the Ambassador and senior embassy officers traveled to Mombasa to host a public forum at which members of the predominantly Muslim coastal community could meet embassy officials and gain a better understanding of U.S. policy and activities. While in Mombasa, the Ambassador also met with Christian leaders to listen to their concerns and to explain U.S. policies and programs. The Ambassador used the occasion to explain personally the conclusions of the April 2001 FBI report on the death of Father John Kaiser.

LESOTHO

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 11,720 square miles and its population is 2,143,141. Christianity, specifically Roman Catholicism, is the dominant religion. Approximately 90 percent of the population are Christian, and 70 percent of Christians are Catholic. Muslims, members of other non-Christian religions, and atheists constitute the remaining 10 percent. Christians are scattered throughout the country, while Muslims live mainly in the northeastern part of the country. Most practitioners of Islam are of Asian origin, while the majority of Christians are the indigenous Basotho.

Many devout Christians still practice their traditional cultural beliefs and rituals along with Christianity. The Catholic Church has fused some aspects of local culture into its services. For example, the singing of hymns during services has developed into a local and traditional way of singing (a repetitive call and response style) in Sesotho—the indigenous language—as well as English. In addition priests are seen dressed in local dress during services.

There are three main missionary groups, all of which are Christian, active in the country: Catholics, Protestants, and Anglicans.

Catholic predominance in the country derives from the successful establishment of Catholic schools in the last century and their influence over education policy. The Catholic Church owns about 75 percent of all primary and secondary schools in the country and was instrumental in establishing the National University.

The Catholic Church helped found the Basotholand National Party (BNP) in 1959 and sponsored it in the independence elections in 1966. Most members of the BNP are practicing Catholics. The BNP ruled the country from independence in 1966 until 1985 when it was overthrown in a military coup. The then-opposition Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) historically has been aligned with the Protestants or evangelicals specifically. They were forced into exile in 1973 after being denied their victory in the 1970 elections.

The members of the BCP, who have remained Protestant, won all 65 seats in the National Assembly when elections were held again in 1993.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors.

There is no state religion, and no evidence that the Government favors any particular religion. However, the majority, if not all, members of the Government are Christians.

The Government does not establish requirements for religious recognition. Generally the Government does not provide benefits to any religious groups; however, Christian groups enjoy a waiver of taxes on donations from outside the country. These donations (in the form of clothes, medicines, food, etc.) are not subjected to import taxation.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There generally is mutual understanding and cooperation between Christians and Muslims. There are efforts within the ecumenical community to promote tolerance and cooperation on social issues. Although there were some tensions between Christians and Muslims in previous years, there were no reports of such tensions during the period covered by this report.

There are serious theological and doctrinal differences among the Christians. The main feud is between the Catholics and the Protestants, especially evangelical, charismatic, and Mormon groups. However, there have been no specific incidents or confrontations during the period covered by this report.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

LIBERIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there were some exceptions.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. Islamic leaders continued to complain of government discrimination against Muslims.

Societal discrimination against Muslims continued to be a problem. Ethnic tensions along religious lines between Muslim and non-Muslim groups also continued to be a problem, particularly between the Lormas and the Mandingos.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 43,000 square miles and its population is 3,164,156. As much as 40 percent of the population practice either Christianity or elements of both Christianity and traditional indigenous religions. Approximately 40 percent practice traditional indigenous religions exclusively. Approximately 20 percent of the population practice Islam, although Islam continued to gain adherents. The Lutheran, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal (AME), and AME Zion denominations, as well as several Pentecostal churches are represented in the Christian community. Some of the Pentecostal movements are independent, while others are affiliated with churches outside the country. There also is a small Baha'i community.

Christianity, traditional indigenous religions, and syncretistic religions combining elements of both Christianity and traditional indigenous religions are found throughout the country. Islam is prevalent only among members of the Mandingo ethnic group, who are concentrated in the northern and eastern counties, and among the Vai ethnic group in the northwest.

Foreign missionary groups in the country include Baptists, Catholics, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there were some exceptions. There is no established state religion. However, government ceremonies invariably open and close with prayer and may include the singing of hymns. The prayers and hymns usually are Christian but occasionally are Muslim.

All organizations, including religious groups, must register their articles of incorporation with the Government, along with a statement of the purpose of the organization; however, traditional indigenous religious groups are not required to register, and generally do not register. Registration is routine, and there have been no re-

ports that the registration process is burdensome or discriminatory in its administration.

In March 2001, President Taylor sponsored the travel of more than 100 pilgrims to Mecca. Some non-Muslims criticized this action as a waste of scarce resources (see Section III).

Two FM radio stations, one operated by the Roman Catholic archdiocese, the other an evangelical station, broadcast Christian-oriented religious programming from Monrovia to the capital and the surrounding area. There are no Islamic-oriented radio stations in the country due to the lack of financial resources in the northern and eastern counties, where the Islamic population is concentrated.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Although the law prohibits religious discrimination, Islamic leaders complained of government discrimination against Muslims. Although there are some Muslims in senior government positions, many Muslims believe that they are bypassed for desirable jobs. Many Muslim business proprietors believe that the Government's decision to enforce an old statute prohibiting business on Sunday discriminates against them. Most Mandingos, and hence most Muslims, were allied with factions that opposed Taylor during the recent civil war and still belong to opposition parties.

In March 2001, the Government moved to shut down the short-wave broadcasts of Radio Veritas, citing "illegal operation." Radio Veritas is operated by the Catholic archdiocese, and the Government briefly had suspended its operations in March 2000. The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications claimed that Radio Veritas applied for and was refused a short-wave license, while the management of Radio Veritas claimed to have documents from the Ministry that granted the station a short-wave license. Radio Veritas continued to broadcast on the FM band throughout the period covered by this report.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

Government forces have been accused of serious human rights abuses against suspected rebels and sympathizers in fighting in Lofa County during the period covered by this report. The Government contends that the insurgents largely are Mandingo Muslims of the ULIMO-K faction that fought against President Charles Taylor's forces during the civil war.

In February 2000, a Muslim activist was ordered arrested on charges of treason after he called on Muslims to quit their government jobs in protest of the Government's inaction since the burning of five mosques in Lofa County in January 2000. The activist went into hiding and later fled the country. The Government has not taken actions openly against Muslims in Lofa county; however, its inaction over reports of abuses in Lofa County contributed to ethnic tension between Muslim and non-Muslim ethnic groups in that area of the country.

By the end of the period covered by this report, the Government had not released a report following its November 1999 investigation of the reported killing of as many as 30 Mandingos in Lofa County in August 1999. Although the authorities subsequently arrested 19 persons, they did not charge anyone with a crime. Mandingo residents of Lofa County continued to be afraid to return to their homes.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Some tensions exist between the major religious communities. The law prohibits religious discrimination; however, Islamic leaders complained of societal discrimination against Muslims. The private sector in urban areas, particularly in the capital, gives preference to Christianity in civic ceremonies and observances, and discrimination against followers of other organized religions reaches into areas of individual opportunity and employment.

In October 2000 in Nimba County, a property dispute between Mandingos and members of the Mano and Gio ethnic groups led to rioting that reportedly killed four persons. A mosque and five other buildings were burned. Police arrested 12 persons in connection with this violence and charged them with arson; however, they had not been brought to trial by the end of the period covered by this report.

Ethnic tensions continued in Lofa County between the predominantly Muslim Mandingo ethnic group and the Lorma ethnic group. By the end of the period cov-

ered by this report, the Government had not yet released a report on the burning of five mosques in Lofa County in January 2000.

Ritual killings, in which body parts used in traditional indigenous rituals are removed from the victim, continued to occur. The number of such killings is difficult to ascertain, since police often describe deaths as accidents even when body parts have been removed. Deaths that appear to be natural or accidental sometimes are rumored to be the work of ritual killers. Little reliable information is readily available about traditions associated with ritual killings. It is believed that practitioners of traditional indigenous religions among the Grebo and Krahn ethnic groups concentrated in the southeastern counties most commonly engage in ritual killings. The victims usually are members of the religious group performing the ritual. Body parts of a member whom the group believes to be powerful are believed to be the most effective ritually. Body parts most frequently removed include the heart, liver, and genitals. The rituals involved have been reported in some cases to entail eating body parts, and the underlying religious beliefs may be related to incidents during the civil war in which faction leaders sometimes ate (and in which one faction leader had himself filmed eating) body parts of former leaders of rival factions. Removal of body parts for use in traditional rituals is believed to be the motive for ritual killings, rather than an abuse incidental to killings committed for other motives. Ritual murders for the purpose of obtaining body parts traditionally were committed by religious group members called "heart men;" however, since the civil war, common criminals inured to killing also may sell body parts. In August 1999, the Government sent a high-level delegation of the National Police to the southeastern counties to investigate reports of ritual killings. There were no reports released from this investigation.

There is an interfaith council that brings together leaders of the Christian and Islamic faiths.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy monitors developments affecting religious freedom, maintains contact with clergy and other leaders of major religious communities, and discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Embassy officers have met on various occasions with the Roman Catholic Archbishop, the United Methodist Bishop, the AME Bishop, the AME Zion Bishop, the Interfaith Council, the National Repentant Muslims, and other religious leaders during the period covered by this report.

MADAGASCAR

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 226,657 square miles and its population is 15,506,472. Most of the population is nominally Christian, of which an estimated 4.5 million are Roman Catholics, 3.5 million are Protestants belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (mostly from Fianarantsoa North), 2 million are Lutherans (mostly from Fianarantsoa South), and less than 1 million are Anglicans (mostly in Antananarivo and Toamasina). Most other citizens are followers of traditional indigenous religions centered on ancestor worship. Although there are no exact figures, Muslims constitute slightly less than an estimated 10 percent of the population (concentrated in the north and northwest); they include ethnic Malagasy as well as most of the ethnic Indians who immigrated within the past 100 years. There are a few Hindus among the Indians.

Foreign missionary groups are active in the country, including Catholics, Protestants of various denominations, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

Religious groups must register and obtain authorization from the Ministry of Interior.

Mainline denominations are organized in the Council of Christian Churches of Madagascar. This group regularly expresses political and economic concerns as well as religious concerns. Severely destabilized by its involvement as a mediator in the political conflict that brought about the Third Republic Council in 1993, the council withdrew from the political scene for several years. In 2000 the council, as part of its commitment to justice, engaged its member churches in the monitoring of elections. Despite the political nature of these activities, there have been no reports of governmental threats or mistreatment of church leaders.

Foreign missionary groups operate freely in the country. Several church-related organizations, some with international affiliations, operate freely in health and social services, development projects, schools, and higher education.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Numerous independent evangelical groups operate freely in all regions of the country, some using their own local media facilities; however, since January 2001, the local branch of the Kimbanguist church, whose membership is less than 5,000, has been prevented from broadcasting its religious service on the government-controlled Radio Madagascar. This restriction appears to be politically motivated, and apparently is based on the pastor's support for the leader of an opposition party and the political, rather than religious, content of his broadcasts.

In January 1998, an organization widely perceived to be affiliated with the Reverend Sun Myung Moon was refused registration, apparently due to concerns about its use of mind-control practices. There is no indication that the organization has reapplied for registration, nor that the Government has changed its decision.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

A Protestant missionary whose family name is Moon was subjected to government harassment due to confusion surrounding his possible connection to the Moon organization. While he was extending his visa and labor certification, officials of the Malagasy Ministry of Labor allegedly called him in and accused him of being part of the Unification Church, whose members previously had been denied visas. He was not denied a visa.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations among religious communities generally are amicable. There is some ethnic Malagasy resentment of the ethnic Indian community, but this primarily is due to perceptions that the relative prosperity of the ethnic Indian community is due to the corruption of government officials and the economic exploitation of ethnic Malagasy customers.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

MALAWI

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 45,745 square miles and its population is estimated at 10,385,849. More than 70 percent of the population are Christian. Among the Christian denominations, the largest are the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian—CCAP) Churches, with smaller numbers of Anglicans, Baptists, evangelicals, and Seventh-Day Adventists. There is a substantial Muslim minority totaling approximately 20 percent of the population. Most Muslims are Sunni Muslim. There also are Hindus, Baha'is, and followers of traditional indigenous religions. There are few atheists.

Foreign missionary groups are present in the country, including Protestant Christian, Catholic, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There are no separate requirements for the recognition of religions, but religious groups must register with the Government. There were no reports that the Government refused to register any religious groups.

Foreign missionaries experienced occasional delays in renewing employment permits, despite the Government's revision of its policy and procedures on temporary employment permits in 1997; however, this appeared to be the result of bureaucratic inefficiency rather than a deliberate government policy against foreign missionaries. Missionaries and charitable workers pay lower fees for employment permits than do other professionals.

In May 2001, the Government released a formal response to a series of pastoral letters from the CCAP churches affirming the churches' right to comment on issues of public concern and invited religious leaders to Lilongwe, the capital, to discuss national issues (see Section III).

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are generally amicable relations between the various religious communities. There is no societal discrimination against members of religious minorities.

Some opposition politicians and clerics have raised Islam as a political issue. Citing the President's adherence to Islam, his contact with Islamic countries such as Libya and Sudan, and the building of new mosques, some opposition politicians and clerics have accused the ruling party of attempting to "Islamicize" the country. An attempt by the Government in early 2000 to replace "bible knowledge" in the school curriculum with the more universal "moral and religious education" course has met with widespread criticism from Christian leaders. In February 2000 when the President suspended the introduction of the new curriculum and returned "bible knowledge" to the curriculum, Muslim leaders rebuked him.

There have been active efforts to foster cooperation between religious groups. For example, the Public Affairs Committee, which is involved prominently in promoting civic education and human rights, includes representatives of various churches and mosques.

In March and April 2001, the CCAP churches released pastoral letters addressing social and political topics of current national interest. The Presbyterian letter in

particular was direct and critical of the Government. While some pro-government newspapers attacked individual members of the clergy, the President publicly affirmed the churches' right to comment on issues of public concern (see Section II). While the pastoral letters created some political tension, there is a continued acceptance of the historical role played by religious organizations in social and political life.

In an isolated incident in April 2000, Muslims and Christians clashed over the efforts of an evangelical preacher to promote an audiotape comparing the Bible and the Koran. Muslims found the tape provocative and blasphemous, and the issue remained an open point of contention between followers of the two religions; however, there were no further actions by either side on this issue during the period covered by this report.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Representatives of the Embassy have frequent contact with leaders and members of all religious communities in the country.

MALI

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to the religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 471,045 square miles, and its population is 10,951,176. Muslims make up approximately 90 percent of the population, and the vast majority of Muslims are Sunni. About 5 percent of the population are Christian, and the Christian community is almost evenly split between Catholic and Protestant denominations. Most of the remainder of the population practice traditional indigenous religions or no religion. Atheism and agnosticism are rare. Most immigrants are from neighboring countries and either practice the majority Muslim faith or belong to a Christian group. The vast majority of citizens practice their religion daily.

There are no geographic concentrations or segregation of religious groups. Christian communities, which tend to be located in and around urban areas, are found throughout the country, but more often in the southern regions. Groups that practice traditional indigenous religions are located throughout the country but are most active in rural areas.

Foreign missionary groups operate in the country; most known foreign missionary groups are Christian groups that are based in Europe and engaged in development work, primarily the provision of health care. A number of U.S.-based Christian missionary groups also operate in the country.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion; the Constitution defines the country as a secular state and allows for religious practices that do not pose a threat to social stability and peace.

The Government requires that all public associations, including religious associations, register with the Government. However, registration confers no tax preference and no other legal benefits, and failure to register is not penalized in practice. The

registration process is routine and is not burdensome. Traditional indigenous religions are not required to register.

Foreign missionary groups operate in the country without government interference. They do not link the benefits of their development activities to conversion. Muslims and non-Muslims may proselytize freely.

Family law, including laws surrounding divorce, marriage, and inheritance, are based on a mixture of local tradition and Islamic law and practice.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

The Minister of Territorial Administration and Collectives can prohibit religious publications that he concludes defame another religion; however, there were no reports during the period covered by this report of instances in which publications were prohibited.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the Muslim majority and the Christian and other religious minorities—including practitioners of traditional indigenous religions—are generally amicable. Adherents of a variety of faiths may be found within the same families. Many followers of one religion attend religious ceremonies of other religions, especially weddings and funerals.

Non-Muslim missionary communities live and work in the country without difficulty. Christian missionaries, especially the rural-based development workers, enjoy good relations within their communities.

Islam as practiced in the country is tolerant and adapted to local conditions. Women participate in economic and political activity, engage in social interaction, and do not wear veils.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting of human rights. Embassy officers meet regularly with religious authorities and government officials in ministries dealing with these issues. During the period covered by this report, the Ambassador began an outreach program to the Islamic and Christian communities. The U.S. Embassy maintains contacts with the foreign missionary community, and monitors the situation for indications that religious freedom may be threatened by the Government or societal pressures. Embassy officers have raised the issue of religious freedom through public diplomacy programs.

MAURITANIA

The Constitution establishes Mauritania as an Islamic republic and decrees that Islam is the religion of its citizens and the State; the Government limits freedom of religion.

There was no change in the status of the respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. While the Constitution decrees that Islam is the religion of its citizens and the state, Christians in the foreign community and the few Christian citizens practice their religion openly and freely. However, proselytizing is prohibited, and distribution of religious materials is prohibited.

Relations between the Muslim community and the small Christian community generally are amicable.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 397,840 square miles, and its population is approximately 2.5 million. Virtually 100 percent of the population are practicing

Sunni Muslims. There is a small number of Christians, and Christian churches have been established in Nouakchott, Atar, Zouerate, Nouadhibou, and Rosso.

There are several foreign Christian nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) active in humanitarian and developmental work in the country.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution establishes Mauritania as an Islamic republic and decrees that Islam is the religion of its citizens and the State; accordingly, the Government limits freedom of religion. However, Christians in the foreign community and the few Christian citizens practice their religion openly and freely.

Both the Government and society generally consider Islam to be the essential cohesive element unifying the country's various ethnic groups and castes. There is a cabinet-level Ministry of Culture and Islamic Orientation and a High Council of Islam consisting of six imams which, at the Government's request, advises on the conformance of legislation to Islamic precepts.

Although the Government provides a small stipend to the imam of the Central Mosque in the capital city of Nouakchott, mosques and Koranic schools normally are supported by their members and other donors.

The Government does not register religious groups; however, secular NGO's must register with the Ministry of the Interior; this includes humanitarian and development NGO's affiliated with religious groups. Nonprofit organizations, including both religious groups and secular NGO's, generally are not subject to taxation.

The judiciary consists of a single system of courts with a modernized legal system that conforms with the principles of Shari'a (Islamic law).

A magistrate of Shari'a, who heads a separate government commission, decides the dates for observing religious holidays and addresses the nation on these holidays.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Shari'a (Islamic law), proclaimed the law of the land under a previous government in 1983, includes the Koranic prohibition against apostasy or conversion to a religion other than Islam; however, it has never been codified in civil law or enforced. The small number of known converts from Islam have suffered no social ostracism, and there have been no reports of societal or governmental attempts to punish them.

Although there is no specific legal prohibition against proselytizing by non-Muslims, in practice the Government prohibits proselytizing by non-Muslims through the use of Article 11 of the Press Act, which bans the publication of any material that is against Islam or contradicts or otherwise threatens Islam; however, there were no reports of the Government punishing persons for violating Article 11 during the period covered by this report. The Government views any attempts by Christians to convert Muslims as undermining society. Foreign Christian NGO's limit their activities to humanitarian and development assistance.

Under Article 11 of the Press Law, the Government may restrict the importation, printing, or public distribution of Bibles or other non-Islamic religious literature, and in practice Bibles are neither printed nor publicly sold in the country. However, the possession of Bibles and other Christian religious materials in private homes is not illegal, and Bibles and other religious publications are available among the small Christian community.

There is no religious oath required of government employees or members of the ruling political party, except for the President and the members of the 5-person Constitutional Council and the 10-person High Council of Magistrates presided over by the President. The Constitutional Council and the High Council of Magistrates advise the President in matters of law and the Constitution. The oath of office includes a promise to God to uphold the law of the land in conformity with Islamic precepts.

Both privately run Koranic schools, which nearly all children attend, and the public schools include classes on religion. These classes teach the history and principles of Islam and the classical Arabic of the Koran. Although attendance of these religion classes ostensibly is required, many students, the great majority of whom are Muslims, decline to attend these classes for diverse ethno-linguistic and religious reasons. Nevertheless these students are able to advance in school and graduate with diplomas, provided that they compensate for their failure to attend the required religion classes by their performance in other classes.

Shari'a Islamic law provides the legal principles upon which the law and legal procedure are based, and because of the manner in which Shari'a is implemented

in the country, courts do not in all cases treat women as the equals of men. For example, the testimony of two women is necessary to equal that of one man. In addition, in awarding an indemnity to the family of a woman who has been killed, the courts grant only half the amount that they would award for a man's death. For commercial and other modern issues not specifically addressed by Shari'a, the law and courts treat women and men equally.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the Muslim community and the small Christian community generally are amicable. There were no incidents of attacks or threats of attacks on the basis of religion during the period covered by this report.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy monitors developments affecting religious freedom, maintains contact with clergy and other leaders of major religious groups, and discusses religious freedom issues with the Government, including the Minister of Culture and Islamic Orientation, in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

On May 14, 2001, the Ambassador discussed religious diversity and freedom of religious practices with the Minister of Culture and Islamic Orientation. During the period covered by this report, a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) grant was given to a local NGO to support the training of imams in the national campaign against HIV/AIDS.

The Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission have discussed issues of religious freedom with representatives of American Christian NGO's working in country.

MAURITIUS

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

Tensions between the Hindu majority and Christian, Creole, and Muslim minorities persist; however, members of each group worshipped without hindrance.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 718 square miles and its population is more than 1 million. In the 2000 census, approximately 50 percent of the population claimed to be Hindu, 32 percent Christian, and 16 percent Muslim. Less than 1 percent claimed to be Buddhist, another faith, atheist, or agnostic. There are no figures for those who actually practice their faith, but there are estimates that the figure is around 60 percent for all religious groups.

Approximately 85 percent of Christians are Roman Catholic. The remaining 15 percent are members of the following churches: Adventist, Assembly of God, Christian Tamil, Church of England, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Evangelical, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Sunni Muslims account for over 90 percent of Muslims; however, there are some Shi'a Muslims. Many Buddhists also are practicing Catholics, since many citizens of Chinese ancestry have sent, and continue to send, their children to the Loreto Convent primary schools located in the major towns.

The north tends to be more Hindu and the south is more Catholic. There also are large populations of Hindus and Catholics in the main cities from the capital of Port Louis to the central cities of Quatre Bornes and Curepipe, and most Muslims and

Christian churches are concentrated in these areas. The offshore island of Rodrigues, with a population of 35,200, predominantly is Catholic.

There are foreign missionary groups active in the country, including the Baptist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

The country is a small island nation, and ethnic groups, known as “communities,” are tightly knit. Intermarriage is relatively rare. An individual’s name easily identifies his or her ethnic and religious background. There is a strong correlation between religious affiliation and ethnicity. Citizens of Indian ethnicity usually are Hindus or Muslims. Citizens of Chinese ancestry usually practice both Buddhism and Catholicism. Creoles and citizens of European descent usually are Catholic; however, there is a growing number of Hindu converts to evangelical Christian churches, a fact that is of growing concern to Hindu organizations.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

Religious organizations and faiths that were present in the country prior to independence, such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Presbyterian Church, the Seventh-Day Adventists, Hindus, and Muslims, are recognized in a parliamentary decree. These groups also receive a lump-sum payment every year from the Ministry of Finance based upon the number of adherents, as determined by a 10-year census. Newer religious organizations (which must have a minimum of 7 members) are registered by the Registrar of Associations and are recognized as a legal entities with tax-free privileges. No groups are known to have been refused registration.

Foreign missionary groups are allowed to operate on a case-by-case basis. There are no government regulations detailing the conditions of their presence or limiting their proselytizing activities. Groups must obtain both a visa and a work permit for each missionary.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

While the Government is secular in both name and practice, for political reasons in the past it has favored the Hindu majority of the population with greater access to government patronage; however, there were no reports that this continued in practice.

Some minorities, usually Creoles and Muslims, allege that a glass ceiling exists within the upper echelons of the civil service that prevents them from reaching the highest levels; however, citizens with a Hindu background predominate in the upper echelons of the civil service.

While some Creole political groups alleged that Christian Creoles received unjust treatment from the police, there was no evidence that this was based on religious differences in particular. Observers believe that such incidents likely are a result largely of the Creoles’ position as the country’s underclass, as well as ethnic differences, since the police force predominantly is Indo-Mauritian. Tensions between Creoles and police were ongoing at the end of the period covered by this report.

Foreign missionaries sometimes are prohibited from residing in the country beyond 5 years (which would permit them to seek Mauritian citizenship), but religious organizations are permitted to send new missionaries to replace them.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government’s refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Tensions between the Hindu majority and Christian, Creole, and Muslim minorities persist; however, no violent confrontations resulted during the period covered by this report.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Support for some conflict resolution activities was provided under the U.S. Democracy and Human Rights Fund.

MOZAMBIQUE

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion; however, the Constitution bans religious denomination-based political parties as threats to national unity.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 308,642 square miles and its population is approximately 17 million. According to the National Institute of Statistics, half of the population does not profess to practice a religion or creed; however, scholars at local universities assert that virtually all persons recognize or practice some form of traditional indigenous religions. Of the approximately 8 million persons who do profess a recognized religion, 24 percent are Roman Catholic, 22 percent are Protestant, and 20 percent are Muslim. Many Muslim clerics disagree with this statistic, claiming that Islam is the country's majority religion.

Religious communities are dispersed throughout the country. The northern provinces and the coastal strip are most strongly Muslim, Catholics predominate in the central provinces, and Protestants are most numerous in the southern region. Government sources note that evangelical Christians represent the fastest growing religious group, with the number of young adherents under age 35 increasing rapidly.

There are 394 distinct denominations of religions registered with the Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice. Among Muslims only a generic "Islamic" community (Sunni) and the Ismaili community are registered. Among Christians, the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Greek Orthodox Churches are registered along with Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, Seventh-Day Adventist, Mormon, Nazarene, and Jehovah's Witnesses groups, as well as many evangelical, apostolic, and Pentecostal churches. The Zion Christian Church, the largest of the African Independent Churches in Mozambique, also has a large number of adherents. Jewish, Hindu, and Baha'i communities also are registered and constitute small minorities. Religious communities tend to draw members from across ethnic, political, economic, and racial lines.

Traditional indigenous practices and rituals are present in most Christian churches, including Catholic churches, and in most Muslim worship. For example, members of these faiths commonly travel to the graves of ancestors to say special prayers for rain. Similarly Christians and Muslims continue to practice a ritual of preparation or inauguration at the time of important events (e.g. a first job, a school examination, a swearing-in, etc.), by offering prayers and spilling beverages on the ground to please ancestors. Some Christians and Muslims consult "curandeiros," traditional healers or spiritualists—some of whom are themselves nominal Christians or Muslims—in search of good luck, healing, and solutions to problems.

Dozens of foreign missionary and evangelical groups operate freely in the country, representing numerous Protestant denominations along with the Summer Institute of Languages Bible Translators and the Tabligh Islamic Call Mission. Muslim missionaries from South Africa have established Islamic schools (madrassas) in many cities and towns of the northern provinces.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides that all citizens have the freedom to practice or not to practice a religion and gives religious denominations the right to pursue their reli-

religious aims freely, and the Government generally respects these rights in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The 1989 Law on Religious Freedom requires religious institutions and missionary organizations to register with the Ministry of Justice, reveal their principal source of funds, and provide the names of at least 500 followers in good standing. No particular benefits or privileges are associated with the registration process, and there were no reports that the Government refused to register any religious group during the period covered by this report. The Christian Council reports that not all religious groups register, but unregistered groups worship unhindered by the Government.

The Government does not favor a particular religion, nor is there a state or dominant religion. There are no national holidays that are religious in nature, but the Government has a liberal leave policy to permit religious observance.

The Government routinely grants visas and residence permits to foreign missionaries. Like all foreigners residing in the country, missionaries face a somewhat burdensome process in gaining legal residency; however, they carry out activities without government interference throughout the country.

The Constitution gives religious groups the right to own and acquire assets, and these institutions are allowed by law to own and operate schools. There are increasing numbers of religious schools in operation; for example, in November 2000, the Islamic community began construction of a primary and secondary school for 1,000 students in Maputo and has established a small college in Nampula. The Catholic University has educational facilities in Maputo, Beira, Nampula, and Cuamba. Religious instruction in public schools is prohibited strictly.

A conference of bishops, including Catholic and Anglican members, meets regularly and consults with the President of the Republic.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The law governing political parties specifically forbids religious parties from organizing, and any party from sponsoring religious propaganda. In late 1998, the Independent Party of Mozambique (PIMO), a predominantly Muslim group without representation in Parliament, began arguing for the right of political parties to base their activities on religious principles. The Government has tolerated PIMO's activities, although it has criticized the group. PIMO and some members of the legislature argued that the Movimento Islamico, a parliamentary caucus of Muslims from the ruling Frelimo party, was tantamount to a religious party.

Most places of worship nationalized by the State in 1977 have been returned to the respective religious organizations; however, the Catholic Church and certain Muslim communities maintain that some properties such as schools, clinics, and private residences remain in state hands. The issue of restitution is complex, because some of these buildings are being used for government-administered schools and clinics, and the final responsibility for establishing a process for property restitution rests with provincial governments. In April 1999, an independent newsletter claimed that the State had not returned Catholic schools and seminary property in Inhambane, Maputo, Niassa, and Zambezia provinces. The Islamic community continued with its efforts to reclaim properties held by the State in Ressano Garcia, Inhambane, Beira, Nacala, and Pemba. These complaints and government decisions are debated periodically, although the churches have not asked for the return of the property in order to avoid depriving the local population of access to social services. The return of property increasingly appears to involve negotiation or collaboration, rather than recourse to the judicial system; for example, there is a state-administered school on Catholic Church property.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

In January 2000, the Supreme Court acquitted an imam who was arrested in 1999 in connection with a murder; in July 2000, the court found 2 other men guilty of the murder and sentenced them to 9 and 16 years' imprisonment.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations among communities of different faiths generally are amicable, especially at the grassroots level. The black and Indian Islamic communities tend to remain separate; however, there were no reports of conflict.

The 4-year-old Forum of Religions, an organization for social and disaster relief composed of members of the Christian Council of Mozambique, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Muslim, Baha'i, and Jewish communities is an example of inter-faith cooperation. The goal of the forum is to offer collective assistance to the needy, without regard to creed. During the floods of early 2000 and 2001, numerous religious communities jointly contributed to flood relief efforts.

In November 2000, various religious and civic society organizations, such as the League of Human Rights, the Islamic Council, the Christian Council, and the Bar Association formed a Civil Society Commission. The body investigated the deaths from asphyxiation of approximately 100 prisoners in Montepuez, Cabo Delgado. However, a prominent Maputo imam noted that the Islamic community often is left out of this type of social and political dialog.

The Catholic Church played a leading role in brokering the 1992 Rome Peace Accords between the Frelimo Government and Renamo opposition coalition. Since that time, it has continued to encourage the evolution of the political system. The Catholic Church and Caritas International, citing the country's successful transition from war to "peaceful communal living," hosted a conference in August 2000 in Maputo on peace and justice. During the period covered by this report, the Catholic Church published pastoral letters encouraging the faltering dialog between Frelimo and Renamo; strongly criticizing the November 2000 deaths of approximately 100 prisoners in Montepuez, Cabo Delgado; and criticizing a rise in criminality and corruption, including the November 2000 killing of renowned journalist Carlos Cardoso.

In early 2000, civil society and the media highlighted religious aspects of draft Family Law legislation. Debate focused on the need for legal recognition of religious and common law marriages, as only civil marriages are legal at present. Under the proposed law, polygamous marriages would not be recognized, although the law would offer protection to the widows and children of polygamous unions. Several leaders within the Islamic community oppose the proposal for not recognizing polygamy. On the other hand, approximately 50 Muslim women staged a public protest against polygamy in early May 2000. Some Islamic groups oppose a section of the law that would raise the legal age of marriage to 16 years of age for both men and women. However, several Christian religious groups have proposed higher minimum ages for marriage, such as 18 or even 20 years of age.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. U.S. Government actions in support of religious freedom have involved a variety of demarches on human rights matters to the Government. The Ambassador and embassy officials also held several meetings with representatives of religious-based nongovernmental organizations, largely in connection with flood relief efforts, as well as with several American missionaries.

NAMIBIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 318,252 square miles, and its population is approximately 1.8 million. A vast majority of citizens—over 90 percent—identify themselves as Christian. The two largest denominations are the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches, although there also are smaller numbers of Baptists, Methodists, and Mormons. The Himba, an ethnic group that constitutes less than 1 percent of the population, practice a traditional indigenous religion oriented toward their natural environment in the desert northwest. The San people (also known as bushmen), who constitute less than 3 percent of the population, also practice a traditional in-

digenous religion. Other non-Christian denominations include the Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Baha'i faiths. Practitioners of these religions predominantly are immigrants, descendants of immigrants, or converted after recent proselytizing. They reside primarily in urban areas. There are few atheists in the country.

Foreign missionary groups operate in the country, including Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Mormon, and Baha'i missionaries.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion, nor does the Government subsidize any particular denomination.

The Government does not recognize any religion formally. There are no registration requirements for religious organizations.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

Some foreign missionaries have complained about the difficulty of obtaining work and residency permits; however, religious workers are subject to the same bureaucratic impediments in obtaining work and residency permits that face all foreign citizens.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the many religious communities are amicable.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The Embassy has engaged the Government on a number of occasions in regards to revising its policy on granting residence and work permits for foreign nationals, including both religious and lay workers. Embassy staff members have frequent contact with citizens and foreign visitors from a wide variety of religious faiths.

NIGER

The Constitution provides for "the right of the free development of each individual in their spiritual, cultural, and religious dimensions," and the Government generally respects the freedom to practice one's religious beliefs, as long as persons respect public order, social peace, and national unity.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

There are generally amicable relations between the various religious communities; however, there were instances when members of the Islamic majority were not tolerant of the rights of members of minority religions to practice their faith. For example, in November 2000 riots led by Islamic fundamentalists, rioters targeted two Christian missionary sites.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 489,076 square miles and its population is approximately 11,200,000. Islam is the dominant religion and is practiced by over 90 percent of the population. There also are small practicing communities of Chris-

tians (including Jehovah's Witnesses) and Baha'is. Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, account for less than 5 percent of the population but are active particularly in Niamey and other urban centers with expatriate populations. As Christianity was the religion of French colonial institutions, its followers include many local believers from the educated, the elite, and colonial families, as well as Africans from neighboring coastal countries, particularly Benin, Togo, and Ghana. Numbering only a few thousand, the Baha'is are located primarily in Niamey and in communities on the west side of the Niger River, bordering Burkina Faso. A small percentage of the population practice traditional indigenous religions. There is no information available regarding the number of atheists in the country.

Active Christian missionary organizations include Southern Baptist, Evangelical Baptist, Catholic, Assemblies of God, Seventh-Day Adventist, Serving in Mission (SIM), and Jehovah's Witnesses.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for "the right of the free development of each individual in their spiritual, cultural, and religious dimensions," and the Government generally respects the freedom to practice one's religious beliefs, as long as persons respect public order, social peace, and national unity.

Religious organizations must register with the Interior Ministry. This registration is a formality, and there is no evidence that the Government has ever refused to register a religious organization. The Government must authorize construction of any place of worship; however, there were no reports that the Government refused such construction during the period covered by this report.

Foreign missionaries work freely, but their organizations must be registered officially as associations. In addition to proselytizing, most missionary groups generally offer development or humanitarian assistance. The Christian community in Galmi, Tahoua Department, houses a hospital and health center run by SIM missionaries. The hospital and health center have been in operation for over 40 years.

Christmas, Easter, and Muslim holy days are recognized as national holidays.

No religious group is subsidized, although the Islamic Association has a weekly broadcast on the government television station. Christian programming generally is broadcast only on special occasions, such as Christmas.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In reaction to rioting by Islamic fundamentalist groups in November 2000 (see Section III), the Government banned six fundamentalist-oriented organizations. The Government justified the ban on the grounds that these organizations were responsible for "disturbing the peace." No mainstream Islamist organizations or human rights organizations have challenged the legality of the bans, which were still in effect at the end of the period covered by this report.

In early 2000, the Government requested that the Nigerian affiliated evangelical Abundant Life Church suspend its radio broadcasts for several months in order to ease tensions with local Islamic fundamentalists. The church complied, but resumed broadcasting several months later.

Starting in 1998, Southern Baptist missionaries in Say (30 miles south of Niamey) faced harassment by members of the majority Islamic community. Upon notifying authorities, the missionaries were told that, while it was within their rights to be there, the local police could not ensure their safety. The problem continued through September 1999, when the missionaries decided to move away. One family has relocated to Gotherye (north of Niamey) and the other family continued its missionary activities in the region but no longer lives in Say. In May 2000, the same Islamic activists in Say threatened to burn down the meeting place of the local Christians who remained and beat or have arrested a local Christian man in the village of Ouro Sidi who continued to work with the Southern Baptists. There were no reports that such threats were ever carried out during the period covered by this report.

Just after the April 1999 coup, the Assemblies of God church in the capital, Niamey, was notified by the mayor's office that it had to close until the "new order" was established; however, the Assemblies of God church remained open, and no further action was ever taken on the case.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are generally amicable relations among the various religious communities, but there have been instances when members of the Islamic majority were not tolerant of the rights of members of minority religions to practice their faith. The cities of Say, Kiota, Agadez, and Madarounfa are considered holy by the local Islamic communities, and the practice of other religions in those cities is not as well tolerated as in other areas.

In November 2000, several Islamist groups demonstrated in Niamey and Maradi, 400 miles east of the capital, to protest a high fashion show being held near Niamey. The demonstrations turned violent, and protesters targeted bars, purported prostitutes, and legal betting kiosks. In addition, on November 9, as Maradi police were preparing to meet with Islamic fundamentalists, traditional leaders, and local officials to defuse the situation, mobs led by Islamic fundamentalists attacked the Abundant Life Church and the nearby compound of SIM, an American missionary group active in the country for over 70 years. The police responded haphazardly and both facilities suffered extensive damage in the attacks. The police arrested 100 persons in connection with the violence in Maradi and banned 6 Islamic groups (see Section II). Although most youths that were arrested were released quickly without charge, approximately 30 men, including the marabout, awaited trial on charges of inciting riots, destruction of property, and looting at the end of the period covered by this report.

In November 2000, the country's most important human rights nongovernmental organization (NGO), the Association Nigerien de Defense de Droit de L'Homme (ANDDH), strongly criticized religious intolerance and violence. In addition, the Imam of Zinder, a city which experienced similar problems in 1999 (but which did not target missionaries), condemned the riots. The ANDDH denounced the Islamic organizations, which were subsequently banned by the Government (see Section II) for violating the rights of Christians. Despite the attack, the SIM continued its extensive activities in the country and is viewed favorably by the community and the Government. In April 2001, the Government offered to pay SIM for its damages, but SIM stated that they would give the money to the police to buy equipment. The Abundant Life Church has repaired its facility using private donations from U.S. sources. In April 2001, two churches approached the persons detained for the violence with an offer to ask the Government to drop the charges if they admitted their guilt and expressed remorse; the detainees refused the offer.

There have been some efforts made to promote interfaith understanding. For example, the Baha'is have sponsored religious tolerance campaigns which have garnered local press coverage.

The Assemblies of God church in Niamey, which has been in its location since 1996, has had an ongoing problem with one of its neighbors, another Christian group that had been trying to have the church closed since its establishment. Despite an order by the Mayor in 1999 to close, the church remained open (see Section II).

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The U.S. Embassy regularly emphasizes the importance of tolerance in its public statements and in meetings with government officials and members of civil society.

The U.S. Embassy maintains good relationships with minority religious groups, most of which are long-term resident missionaries and well-known members of the American community. Embassy officials also have contact with the Catholic mission, the Baha'i community, and Islamic organizations. During the period covered by this report, embassy officials met with leaders of a wide range of Islamic organizations, from mainstream academics to fundamentalists, to hear their perspectives on issues facing the country, such as AIDS.

In response to the incidents of November 2000 (see Section III), U.S. Embassy officials immediately went to Maradi and met with the missionary victims and senior government, police, and regional military officials. The U.S. Ambassador and Deputy Chief of Mission traveled to Maradi during the period covered by this report to demonstrate the U.S. Embassy's ongoing attention to religious freedom and tolerance.

NIGERIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance; however, the Government restricted these rights in practice in certain respects.

The status of respect for religious freedom deteriorated during the year due to the implementation of an expanded version of Shari'a (Islamic law) in several northern states, which challenged constitutional protections for religious freedom and sparked interreligious violence. The Constitution prohibits state and local governments from adopting an official religion; however, it also provides that states may elect to use Islamic (Shari'a) customary law and courts. Following the lead of Zamfara state, Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna, Jigawa, Yobe, and Bauchi states also adopted varying forms of criminal Shari'a law. Government discrimination based on religion continued during the period covered by this report. Although Christians are exempt from Shari'a law, the ramifications of expanded Shari'a law infringed upon the rights of non-Muslims in the north to live in a society governed by secular laws.

Interreligious tension decreased in Kaduna state during the period covered by this report; however, other states, such as Zamfara and Gombe, saw interreligious tensions rise. While the widespread rioting that occurred in February and May 2000 was not repeated, there were reports of clashes between Muslims and Christians during the period covered by this report. There was some societal discrimination against religious minorities.

U.S. Embassy officials regularly discussed religious freedom issues with various federal, state and local officials. U.S. Embassy officials and U.S. Government officials based in Washington advocated the peaceful resolution of ethnic and religious conflicts in the country. The U.S. Government stressed that human rights and religious freedom must be respected in any resolution of the Shari'a question.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 356,700 square miles, and its population is estimated to be 120 million; however, there has not been an accurate census for more than 30 years, and many observers believe that the country's population may significantly exceed this figure. Approximately half of the country's population practice Islam; approximately 40 percent practice Christianity, and approximately 10 percent practice exclusively traditional indigenous religions or no religion. Many persons practice elements of Christianity or Islam and elements of a traditional indigenous religion. The predominant form of Islam in the country is Sunni. The Christian population includes Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, and a growing number of evangelical and Pentecostal Christians. Catholics constitute the largest Christian denomination.

There is a strong correlation between religious differences and ethnic and regional diversity. The north, which is dominated by the large Hausa and Fulani (Peuhl) ethnic groups, is predominantly Muslim; however, there are significant numbers of Christians in the middle belt and urban centers of the north, particularly in Kaduna and Jos. In the southwest, where the large Yoruba ethnic group is dominant, there is no dominant religion; Islam is practiced in a plurality, if not a majority, of the largest cities of the southwest due, in part, to the Hausa and Fulani communities in those regions. Many Yorubas practice Islam or Christianity, while others continue to practice the traditional Yoruba religion, which includes a belief in a supreme deity and the worship of lesser deities that serve as agents of the supreme deity in aspects of daily life. In the east, where the large Igbo ethnic group is dominant, Catholics and Methodists are in the majority, although many Igbos continue to observe traditional rites and ceremonies.

Foreign missionaries operate in the country and include Jesuits, Dominicans, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), the Church of Christ, and the Society for International Missions. Rough estimates put the number of foreign missionaries at over 1,000, with many in the area around Jos, in Plateau state.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, including freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance; however, the Government restricted these rights in practice in certain respects.

The Constitution prohibits state and local governments from adopting an official religion; however, some Christians have alleged that Islam has been adopted as the de facto state religion of several northern states, given the reintroduction of Shari'a criminal law, and the continued use of state resources to fund the construction of mosques, the teaching of Alkalis (Muslim judges), and pilgrimages to Mecca (Hajj). However, state funds also are used to fund Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem. In general states with a clear Christian or Muslim majority explicitly favor the majority faith. There are 36 states in the country; governors have autonomy in decision-making but derive their resources from the federal Government. Both the federal and state governments are involved in religious matters, including the regulation of mandatory religious instruction in public schools, subsidized construction of churches and mosques, state-sponsored participation in the Hajj, and pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

The Constitution provides that states may elect to use Islamic (Shari'a) customary law and courts. Until the reintroduction of criminal Shari'a by Zamfara State in January 2000, the jurisdiction of Shari'a courts, which are part of the regular court system, had been limited to family or personal law cases involving Muslims, or to civil disputes between Muslims who consent to the courts' jurisdiction. However, the Constitution states that a Shari'a court of appeal may exercise "such other jurisdiction as may be conferred upon it by the law of the State." Some states have interpreted this language as granting them the right to expand the jurisdiction of existing Shari'a courts to include criminal matters (see Section III). On October 8, 1999, the governor of Zamfara state, Ahmed Sani, signed a bill that established Shari'a courts and courts of appeal in Zamfara state, and another bill that constituted the Shari'a penal code; the bills took effect on January 27, 2000. Zamfara's law adopted traditional Shari'a in its entirety, with the exception that apostasy was not criminalized. Other Muslim communities, particularly from the states of Kano, Niger, Sokoto, Jigawa, Borno, Yobe, Kaduna, and Katsina states, began to echo the call for Shari'a in their states. At the end of the period covered by this report, ten northern states had adopted variations of Shari'a law—Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Niger, Kano, Katsina, Kaduna Jigawa, Yobe, and Bauchi. Adherence to the new Shari'a provisions is compulsory for Muslims in some states and optional in others. The Constitution also provides that the federal Government is to establish a Federal Shari'a Court of Appeal and Final Court of Appeal; however, the Government had not yet established such courts by the end of the period covered by this report.

In November 1999, President Obasanjo expressed the view that the expanded Shari'a provisions were unconstitutional; however, the federal Government did not intervene legally to annul the provisions. Defendants have the right to challenge the constitutionality of Shari'a criminal statutes through the courts; however, no challenges with adequate legal standing had made their way through the appellate system by the end of the period covered by this report. Huri-Laws, a domestic human rights nongovernmental organization (NGO), challenged the constitutionality of Zamfara Shari'a statutes in two separate cases. Huri-Laws was the plaintiff in the first case, and a Christian citizen from Zamfara state was the plaintiff in the second case. The Zamfara state high court dismissed both cases, ruling that the statute did not infringe on the rights of either plaintiff.

Christian and Islamic groups planning to build new churches or mosques are required to register with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). The law requires that such groups name a board of trustees, place a notice of the group's intent to organize in three nationwide newspapers, and send trustee information to the CAC. If no objections are received, the group can proceed with its meetings. This law was put into effect to stem the proliferation of new buildings in the absence of zoning laws, to resolve legal questions arising from disputes over church ownership and control, to provide a single registry for government reference in the event that compensation is demanded following civil disturbances, and to allow for legal solemnization of marriages. The CAC did not deny registration to any religious group during the period covered by this report; however, some religious groups experienced delays in obtaining permission from local zoning boards to build houses of worship.

The military's chaplaincy corps includes imams, Catholic priests, and Protestant pastors. There were no reports in the military of discrimination or nonadvancement to senior positions due to religious beliefs. No one religious faith dominates the senior ranks of the military.

The Government remained a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) during the period covered by this report and continued to send representatives to the annual meeting in Cairo despite concerns of Christian citizens that that this action undermined the concept of a secular state.

Each year the Government declares the following Islamic and Christian festival days as national holidays: Eidelkabit, Eidelfitr, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Eidelmaulud, and Christmas Day.

Some state governors actively have encouraged interfaith and interethnic discussions. For example, Kaduna state governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi appointed Muslims and Christians to reconciliation committees following the riots of February and May 2000. Governor Makarfi also consulted with the reconciliation committees on proposed criminal law reforms.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Throughout the year, the Government nominally required organizers of outdoor public functions to apply for permits, although both government authorities and those assembling often ignored this requirement. The Government retained legal authority to ban gatherings whose political, ethnic, or religious content might lead to unrest. In September 2000, police in Lagos denied the Committee of Concerned Citizens (CCC) a permit to hold a workshop on the adoption of Shari'a law. In 2000 several northern state governments banned open air preaching and public religious processions. The Kogi state government enacted such a ban on March 1, 2000; however, the ban was lifted by the end of the period covered by this report. The Kaduna state government followed shortly thereafter, enacting a ban on all forms of processions, rallies, demonstrations, and meetings in public places. Such bans were viewed as necessary public safety measures after approximately 2,000 people died in Shari'a related violence nationwide in 2000 (see Section III). For example, in March 2001, the authorities in Kaduna State cancelled a civil rights conference on Shari'a due to fears of potential violence from vigilante groups. None of these bans had been lifted formally by the end of the period covered by this report; however, state governments granted some permits on a case-by-case basis. In the southern part of the country, large outdoor religious gatherings continued to be common.

Following nationwide Shari'a-related violence in 2000, many northern states banned public proselytizing, although it is permitted by the Constitution. Some states relaxed these restrictions informally during the reporting period, and allowed some public proselytizing by Christians and Muslims. Missionaries reported that law enforcement officials harassed them when they proselytized outside of their designated zones. Both Christian and Muslim organizations alleged that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Immigration Department restricted the entry into the country of certain religious practitioners, particularly persons suspected of intending to proselytize. Proselytizing did not appear to be restricted in the southern part of the country. Many missionary groups also have noted bureaucratic delays and obstruction and attempts to extort money for the processing of necessary residence permits for foreigners; however, many foreign businesses and other nonreligious organizations also have encountered similar difficulties.

Although the expanded Shari'a laws technically do not apply to Christians, the Christian minority, especially in Zamfara state, was affected by many of the social provisions of the laws, such as the separation of the sexes in public transportation vehicles and bans on the sale of alcohol and alcohol consumption. Niger State has also enforced a ban on the selling of alcohol. In Zamfara state, Christian associations have arranged for private transportation services for Christian females so that they are not forced to wait for female only transportation provided by the Zamfara state government. Sokoto state's transportation system is run completely by private operators. Sokoto state governor Dalhatu Bafarawa said that the state cannot compel private operators to carry female passengers if doing so violates their religious convictions. In Zamfara state schoolchildren continued to be segregated by gender in schools. The Governor of Zamfara also disbursed public funds to refurbish mosques and pronounced that only persons with beards would win government contracts. There is a long tradition of separating schoolchildren by gender in the north; this practice was codified in Kebbi and Sokoto states in May 2000.

In Zamfara state, laws proposed during the period covered by this report included a dress code for women that bans short skirts and trousers, the mandatory closing of shops on Fridays, and a ban of video rental clubs. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) branch in Zamfara state has protested these new laws to the Zamfara state government. Reportedly they were told that the first law was proposed on public decency grounds, and that the second law only would apply to Muslim businesses.

Military bases are considered Shari'a free zones under the new laws; however, on at least one occasion, delivery of alcohol to a base in Kano was forcibly interdicted by Kano vigilantes (see Section III).

All Muslims in states that expanded Shari'a to criminal matters are subject to the new Shari'a criminal codes. In Zamfara state, all cases involving Muslims must be

heard by a Shari'a court. Other states with Shari'a law still permit Muslims to choose common law courts for criminal cases; however, societal pressure forces most Muslims to use the Shari'a court system.

In March 2001, journalists covering the implementation of Shari'a law in Bauchi state were warned by the governor, Ahmed Mu'azu, that they would be prosecuted if they misrepresented the Government's position on Shari'a; however, no journalists were arrested by the end of the period covered by this report.

The law prohibits religious discrimination; however, state government officials discriminated against adherents of minority religions in hiring practices and in the awarding of state contracts.

Christians in the predominantly Muslim northern states also alleged that local government officials used zoning regulations to stop or slow the establishment of new Christian churches. Officials have responded that many of these new churches are being formed in traditionally residential neighborhoods that were not zoned for religious purposes. The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) offices in Zamfara and Sokoto states alleged that local authorities there delayed or denied to Christians certificates of occupancy (CO's), which are required to show title to land. For example, the Catholic Church in Zamfara state has been unable to retake possession of a clinic that was confiscated during a period of military rule in the 1970's. Renewal of the CO for the church building was approved; however, the Church has been unable to obtain a CO to reoccupy the clinic building and the adjoining land. Zamfara and Sokoto state officials denied that discrimination was behind the cases cited by CAN. State officials said the certification boards were dealing with a large backlog of cases for all persons, regardless of religious faith.

Although religious belief or adherence is not required for membership in registered political parties, in May 2001, the Zamfara state house assembly suspended for 3 months two of its Muslim members, Ibrahim Musa Murai and Abdullahi Majidadi Kurya, for not supporting bills introduced by the governor. They were accused of not showing full support for a compulsory closing of businesses, schools, and hospitals during Friday prayers and an enforced zakat (alms) payment to assist the needy.

Although distribution of religious publications remained generally unrestricted, the Government continued to enforce lightly a ban on published religious advertisements. There were reports by Christians in Zamfara state that the state government restricted the distribution of religious (Christian) literature. In 2000 Bishop Samson Bala of Gusau Diocese said that the state radio station had closed its doors to Christians. According to the Bishop Bala, commercials and paid advertisements containing Christian content were not accepted, and only Islamic religious programs were aired. Similar discrimination against the use of state-owned media for Muslim programming was reported in the south.

According to the Constitution, students are not required to receive instruction relating to a religion other than their own; however, public school students throughout the country were subjected to mandatory Islamic or Christian religious instruction. Islamic studies are mandatory in public schools in Zamfara and other northern states, to the exclusion of Christianity. State authorities claim that students are permitted to decline to attend these classes or to request a teacher of their own religion to provide alternative instruction; however, in practice the dominant religion of the state is taught in the school, and students cannot use these other mechanisms. There are reports that Christianity is taught in the same manner in Enugu and Edo states, and that Muslim students cannot access Koranic teaching in the public schools. During the period covered by this report, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) leaders volunteered to place teachers of Christianity in Zamfara and Sokoto state schools, where students alleged that they were being forced to take courses in Islamic religious knowledge in order to graduate. Governors of both states accepted the offer of assistance and stated that they had not been aware of the problem; however, CAN did not provide any teachers in either state during the reporting period. They indicated that schools in rural areas may not have qualified teachers of Biblical or Christian education classes, and that students in such schools have a right to opt out of Koranic knowledge classes, which otherwise would be required.

The Government continued to enforce a 1987 ban on religious organizations on campuses of primary schools, although individual students retain the right to practice their religions in recognized places of worship.

On December 5, 2000, over 1,500 Muslim students from the University of Ibadan and Ibadan public schools gathered at Oyo state government offices to protest the failure of public schools to offer Islamic studies courses alongside Christian courses. On November 30, 2000, the students also protested an attack by Christian theology students, described as Crusaders, on Islamic leaders, teachers, and students at Im-

manuel College Primary School. The police arrested the attackers but later released them without charge (see Section III).

The Government continued to settle property claims by Muslim Brotherhood leader Ibrahim El-Zakzaky for compensation for his home and mosque, which were razed by law enforcement in 1997.

There are no legal provisions barring women or other groups from testifying in civil court or giving their testimony less weight; however, the testimony of women and non-Muslims is usually accorded less weight in Shari'a courts. For example, if one woman testifies, a second woman must also provide testimony to equal the weight of the testimony of one man.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

The extension of Shari'a law in many northern states generated a public debate on whether Shari'a punishments such as amputation for theft, and caning for fornication and public drunkenness constituted "torture or . . . inhuman or degrading treatment" as stipulated in the Constitution. Some northern states have administered amputations and canings pursuant to expanded Shari'a law. For example, on May 3, 2001, the government of Zamfara state amputated the hand of Lawal Isa Buzu, a convicted bicycle thief. The victim voluntarily submitted to the full Shari'a proceedings, including amputation, and chose not to appeal the decision. In September 2000, a Sokoto Shari'a court handed down a sentence of amputation for a thief; the sentence had not been carried out by year's end. In early July 2000, a sentence of amputation was carried out against a convicted thief.

In January 2001, Zamfara state officials caned 14-year old Bariya Magazu for fornication because she bore a child out of wedlock. Magazu reportedly was forced by her father to provide sexual favors to three men to whom he owed debts. Instead of prosecuting the three men for statutory rape, the court required Ms. Magazu to produce four witnesses to corroborate her testimony. Because she could not produce four witnesses, the Shari'a court handed down a sentence of 100 lashes for fornication and 80 additional lashes for bearing false testimony. Magazu appealed and the sentence temporarily was suspended; however, the judge eventually imposed a reduced sentence of 100 lashes. Magazu continued her appeal contesting the propriety of her conviction under Islamic law. Magazu's appeal was pending at the end of the period covered by this report.

Other convicted Muslim criminals in Shari'a law states were subjected to public caning for various minor offenses, such as petty theft, consumption of alcohol, and engaging in prostitution. For example, in August 2000, two motorcycle taxi drivers were caned for carrying Muslim female passengers in violation of the law in Zamfara State. Indigent persons without legal representation were more likely to have their sentences carried out immediately upon being sentenced.

Non-Muslims are not subject to Shari'a statutes; however, a Christian was tried for assault in a criminal Shari'a court in Kano state after he voluntarily chose that jurisdiction, apparently because the penalty of caning was less onerous than the potential penalty under common law.

A number of state sanctioned and private vigilante Shari'a enforcement groups have formed in states with expanded Shari'a law (see Section III). In Zamfara state, Governor Ahmed Sani vested the local vigilante group with full powers of arrest and prosecution because he believed that the police were not enforcing the new Shari'a laws. Governor Saminu Turaki of Jigawa state also mobilized a statewide Shari'a enforcement committee to arrest, detain, and prosecute Muslim offenders. In April 2001, the Katsina Arts and Musicians Association wrote to the Katsina House of Assembly protesting the arrest and detention of Sirajo Mai Asharalle. Asharalle was arrested by the state-sanctioned Rundunar Adalci vigilante group while performing music at a local function, but was released soon after his arrest. The performance of music and dancing was banned under the Shari'a law introduced by Katsina state.

On February 24, 2001, 10 persons were killed and 3 persons were injured when youths claiming to be Shi'ite Muslims clashed with police during a protest following the visit of Israeli Ambassador Itzhak Oren to Gombe state. The youths also burned two churches and a nightclub.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

Curfews, bans on large religious gatherings outside of traditional houses of worship, bans on religious processions, and bans on proselytization remain in effect; however, some local and state authorities informally relaxed the bans in practice, and allowed some public proselytizing.

During the reporting period, the Government contributed approximately \$3.63 million (400 million naira) to pay restitution to victims of the February 2000 riots. Governor Makarfi of Kaduna state provided a similar amount in state funds.

Since the outbreak of Shari'a-related violence in 2000 (see Section III), the governors of Kaduna, Abia, and Lagos states have taken steps to prevent further violence and tension. During the period covered by this report, the governors made more tempered public statements, and focused on shared economic opportunities between residents of their states and migrants, including ethnic minorities, from other regions of the country. During the period covered by this report, Governor Makarfi of Kaduna state visited many southern and middlebelt states to apologize for the loss of life during the Kaduna riots. He emphasized the importance of respecting ethnic and religious diversity, and he encouraged those who left Kaduna state to return.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Religious differences often correspond to regional and ethnic differences. For example, the northern region and much of the middlebelt are overwhelmingly Muslim, as are the large Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups of that area. Many southern ethnic groups are predominantly Christian. Consequently it is often difficult to distinguish between religious conflict and discrimination, and ethnic conflict and discrimination. Religious tensions often underscored what were predominantly ethnic confrontations.

In February and May 2000, rioting between Muslim and Christian groups over the proposed extension of Shari'a in Kaduna caused the deaths of more than 1,500 persons and massive property destruction. Over 500 persons, predominantly of the Hausa ethnic group, were killed in reprisals that took place in Abia, Imo, and other eastern states. While the widespread rioting that occurred in February and May 2000 was not repeated during the period covered by this report, there were reports of clashes between Muslims and Christians.

On September 7, 2000, Christians attacked Muslims during a riot in Bambam, Gombe state, following the visit of a committee investigating public opinion on the introduction of Shari'a law. Governor Abubakar Hashidu stated that 18 Muslims died during the rioting. A number of mosques, churches, shops, homes, and vehicles were destroyed in the riot. In September 2000, Gombe state governor Abubakar Hashidu set up a judicial commission of inquiry to investigate the causes of the religious clash that took place in Bambam in 2000. The 17-member committee includes both Christians and Muslims.

In late November 2000, Muslim youths attacked Christian residents, shops, and buildings in Jigawa state. Reportedly the students were angry about statements made against Islam and the Prophet that appeared in a publication by a National Youth Service Corps member. At least one person died in the violence, and a number of churches and stores were burned.

In December 2000, Muslim students alleged that they were beaten by Christian seminary students from a neighboring school during protests in Lagos state (see Section II).

In May 2001, violence again erupted in Gombe state during legislative debate on the introduction of Shari'a law. Christian groups organized protests in the town of Kano that turned violent. According to a government spokesman, four persons were injured, a number of shops were looted, and a mosque and a church were burned down.

Following the violence related to the expansion of Shari'a law in February and May 2000, several committees were established, both by government officials and by religious leaders, to work for peace and a better understanding between Christians and Muslims, and to obtain a solution to the Shari'a debate (see Section II). During the period covered by this report, committee members traveled to several northern and middle-belt states to appeal for interreligious tolerance.

In July 2000, a Hausa woman who violated a religious taboo against women viewing a Yoruba festival was killed by a mob. This incident ignited reciprocal ethnic violence in the northern, predominately Hausa city of Kano, with the Hausa majority attacking the Yoruba minority. Approximately 80 persons died over a 4 day period; the majority of the victims were Yorubas.

Vigilante groups formed during the period covered by this report to enforce the new Shari'a laws, and in some cases, punish offenders. Some of these vigilante groups were state-sanctioned (see Section II). In January 2001, criminal youths posing as Shari'a enforcers beat Livinus Obi, an Igbo Christian, for allegedly selling beer in Kano State. They also invaded his home, broke bottles of beer, and stole money and liquor. Although the assailants were brought before a Shari'a court on charges of assault and theft, Obi dropped the charges because he feared testifying against neighbors involved in the attack. In early 2000, vigilantes pulled a woman from a motorcycle for breaking the new rule requiring separate transportation for women in a local government area of Zamfara State; she was injured in the attack. The woman was not a Muslim.

In Kano state, an unofficial vigilante group known as Hisbah began taking action against both Muslims and Christians who violate the new Shari'a laws. In February 2001, youths in the Hisbah attacked a truck bringing alcohol to a military base in Kano state, and attacked the Nigeria Union of Journalists press center in Kano following allegations that alcohol was served on the premises. On April 14, 2001, Kano state Deputy Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje led vigilante enforcers and national police to five of Kano's largest hotels and ordered them to stop selling alcohol. Unofficial vigilante officials broke liquor bottles and engaged in minor vandalism at the hotels. On April 16, 2001, the Hisbah burnt down the Henzino Hotel, an establishment known for serving alcohol in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood. In April 2001, some Kano state hotels stopped renting conference halls to Christian groups for fear of being targets of this vigilante violence.

The law prohibits religious discrimination; however, private businesses frequently are guilty of informal religious and ethnic discrimination in their hiring practices and purchasing patterns. In nearly all states, ethnic rivalries between majority groups and minority "immigrants" lead to some societal discrimination against minority ethnic and religious groups.

Purdah, the Islamic practice of keeping girls and women in seclusion from men outside the family, continued in parts of the far north.

In the north, Muslim communities favor boys over girls in deciding which children to enroll in secondary and elementary schools.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

U.S. Embassy officials regularly discussed religious freedom issues with various federal, state and local officials. Embassy officials raised religious freedom issues with government officials in the context of the U.S. Government's overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The U.S. Government, through the U.S. Embassy and in statements from officials in Washington, sought to encourage a peaceful resolution to the Shari'a issue and urged that human rights and religious freedom be respected in any resolution. The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) also have created programs for conflict resolution training. During a visit to the country in August 2000, former President Clinton appealed for interreligious and interethnic understanding and cooperation.

RWANDA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, while the Government generally respects this right in practice, it imposes some restrictions.

There was an improvement in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. In July 2000, there were reports of detentions of members of Jehovah's Witnesses by local officials and of radio broadcasts by local officials announcing restrictions on the Jehovah's Witnesses' right of assembly and worship. However, discussions between church leaders, government officials, and U.S. Embassy officials resulted in a reversal of the Government's policy, and in May 2001, leaders of Jehovah's Witnesses in the country reported that they enjoyed religious freedom and that no members of their church were detained or in prison. Tensions lessened between the Catholic Church and the Government, largely due to the clearing of Archbishop Misago of genocide charges, and the reconsecration of some churches and their return to service, as well as increased dialog. However, the Government tore down some storefront churches and continued to watch closely for the development of cult churches after the doomsday cult deaths in Uganda in 2000.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 10,169 square miles and its population is approximately 8.1 million. A 2001 study conducted by researchers from Johns Hopkins University reported that 49.6 percent of the population were Catholic, 43.9 percent Protestant, 4.6 percent Muslim, 1.7 claimed no religious beliefs, and 0.1 percent practiced traditional indigenous beliefs. This study indicated a 19.9 percent increase in the number of Protestants, a 7.6 percent drop in the number of Catholics, and a 3.5 percent increase in the number of Muslims from the United Nations Population Fund survey in 1996. The figures for Protestants include the growing number of members of Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelical Protestant groups. There also is a small population of Baha'is. There has been a proliferation of small, usually Christian-linked sects since the 1994 genocide.

Foreign missionaries and church-linked nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) of various faiths operate in the country, including Trocaire, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Federation, World Vision, World Relief, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Norwegian Church Aid, Salvation Army, African Muslim Agency, American Jewish Distribution Committee, Jesuit Relief Society, Christian Aid, Christian Direct Outreach, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, and Jesus Alive Ministries.

There is no indication that religious belief is linked directly to membership in any political party. Of the eight parties, the only one with a religious component to its name—the Democratic Islamic Party—claims to have non-Muslim members.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, while the Government generally respects this right in practice, it imposes some restrictions. There is no state religion.

The law provides for small fines and imprisonment for up to 6 months for anyone who interferes with a religious ceremony or with a minister in the exercise of his profession.

On April 1, 2001, the Government promulgated a law requiring all nonprofit organizations, including churches and religious organizations, to register with the Ministry of Justice in order to be granted the status of a "legal entity." The registration requirement is not new, and groups can maintain their up-to-date valid registrations, renewing them only when they expire. Major religious groups and churches reported no difficulties in registering with the Ministry of Justice.

Foreign missionaries openly promote their religious beliefs, and the Government has welcomed their development assistance.

The Government permits religious instruction in public schools. In some cases, students are given a choice between instruction in "religion" or "morals." In the past, missionaries established schools that were operated by the Government. In those schools, religious instruction tends to reflect the denomination of the founders, either Catholic or Protestant. Christian and Muslim private schools operate as well.

The Government observes four religious holidays as official holidays: Christmas, The Idd-El-Fitr, All Saints' Day, and Assumption.

The Government, within its limited financial means, has sponsored or participated in a number of religious fora aimed at increasing interfaith understanding and support.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In the past, the Government forbade religious meetings at night on the grounds that insurgents formerly used the guise of nighttime "religious meetings" to assemble their supporters before attacking nearby targets; however, by the end of the period covered by this report, the Government had stopped restricting religious meetings at night and had lifted local restrictions on meetings for worship and proselytizing.

In late 2000, several "storefront" churches consisting of wooden frames covered by plastic sheeting were torn down because the churches were not registered with the Ministry of Justice. In late 2000, a few "storefront" evangelical preachers applied for status as nonprofit groups but were refused following a determination by the Ministry that the groups were profit-oriented. However, by the end of the period covered by this report, the Government's strategy had changed to one of urging the groups to register with the Ministry of Justice in order to regularize their status.

At least one application for registration was accepted, and some applications were pending at the end of the period covered by this report.

In July 2000, there were reports of radio broadcasts by local officials announcing restrictions on the Jehovah's Witnesses' right of assembly and worship; however, by the end of the period covered by this report, there were no further reports of restrictions on Jehovah's Witnesses.

There were no reports of any adherents of the Temperance or Abagorozi groups being detained during the period covered by this report.

The Government continued to watch closely for the development of cult churches after the doomsday cult deaths in Uganda in 2000. During the period covered by this report, government officials noted their concerns regarding doomsday cults developing in the country in local newspapers.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

Local officials detained members of Jehovah's Witnesses for refusing to participate in nightly security patrols; however, there have been no reports of detention or harassment since late 2000.

Several members of the clergy of various faiths have faced charges of genocide in Rwandan courts, in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and in foreign courts, notably in Belgium. Catholic Bishop Misago, who was cleared of genocide related charges in June 2000, again appeared on the list of accused genocidaires after the prosecution announced its intention to appeal the verdict. On October 25, 2000, two Catholic priests were released when their 1998 convictions on genocide charges were overturned on appeal.

Numerous groups, particularly human rights groups, reported that Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA) troops and Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) targeted Catholic clergy for abuse. Abuses reportedly took the form of attacks on missions, killings of priests, the rape of nuns, and the burning of churches. Credible reports indicate that RCD and RPA troops deliberately targeted Catholic churches as a means of both intimidating the local population and in retaliation for the Church's perceived role in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Between February and September 2000, RCD rebels and Rwandan authorities operating in the DRC kept Archbishop Kataliko of Bukavu in exile in the Kivu provinces because they suspected him of condoning resistance to the rebellion. These authorities only allowed the Archbishop's return to Bukavu, DRC, on September 14, 2000, following significant U.S. and international pressure. The Archbishop died of a heart attack the following month while in Rome.

Some religious leaders were perpetrators of violence and discrimination. For example, on June 8, 2001, a jury in Belgium convicted four Rwandans—a physics professor, a former government minister, and a nun and her mother superior from a Benedictine convent—for complicity in the murder of approximately 7,000 Tutsis in and around the town of Sovu in the spring of 1994. The two nuns were sentenced to 12 and 15 years, respectively, and the professor and former government minister were sentenced to 12 and 20 years, respectively.

There were no reports of religious prisoners, although some Jehovah's Witnesses were detained in 2000 for refusing to participate in nightly security patrols.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

In the latter half of 2000, the Government lifted restrictions on Jehovah's Witnesses holding meetings and preaching publicly. Members of Jehovah's Witnesses who were detained for non-participation in nightly security patrols were released by September 2000. Senior government officials intervened personally with local officials to ensure that religious freedom is respected at all government levels, and local church members reported that harassment of members by local officials had ceased and that the church now enjoys religious freedom.

Unlike in previous years, few Catholic officials repeated the claim that the Government is prejudiced against the Church; senior clergy reported that relations between the Church and the Government had improved because of collaboration and dialog in the areas of education and reconciliation. The Church and the Government moved closer to a resolution of the question of using churches as genocide memorials, and several churches were reconsecrated and returned to serving the community.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations among the different religious groups generally are amicable. Disputes between religious groups are rare; however, in July 2000, some local authorities increased tensions between groups when they harassed members of the Jehovah's Witnesses for not participating in nightly security patrols and publicly pointed out that Protestants, Muslims, and Catholics participated regularly (see Section II).

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Embassy officials maintain regular contact with leaders and members of the religious communities in the country.

In July and August 2000, U.S. Embassy officials approached senior government officials in regards to complaints of harassment and detention from local and international offices of Jehovah's Witnesses. In early 2001, Embassy officials discussed the destruction of small storefront churches with senior Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Local Governance and Social Affairs officials.

U.S. Embassy political officers held numerous meetings with members of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, leaders of the Muslim community, and small, evangelical Protestant groups, among others, to promote interfaith dialog and discuss religious freedom. In addition Embassy political officers regularly met with local and international nongovernmental organizations involved in peace, justice, and reconciliation efforts that focus on religious tolerance and freedoms.

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 622 square miles and its population is 138,000. The population predominantly is Roman Catholic. Approximately 90 percent of the population are Catholic, 5 percent practice traditional indigenous religions, 5 percent are atheist, and less than 1 percent are Protestant.

There are Catholic and Protestant missionaries in the country, and missionaries of other religions also operate in the country.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

Religious organizations are required to register with the Government; however, there were no reports that any groups were denied registration or that the activities of unregistered groups were restricted.

There are no restrictions on the activities of foreign clergy, and missionaries in the country operate unhindered.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are amicable relations between the various religious communities.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy, based in Libreville, Gabon, discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. In addition embassy officials regularly meet with the country's Catholic bishop during visits to the country.

SENEGAL

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government maintains relations with all major religious groups in the country and discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 74,132 square miles, and its population is 9,987,494. According to current government demographic data, Islam is the predominant religion and is practiced by approximately 94 percent of the country's population. There is also an active Christian community (4 percent), including Roman Catholics and diverse Protestant denominations. An estimated 2 percent (the remainder of the population) practice exclusively traditional indigenous religions or no religion.

The country is ethnically and religiously diverse. Although there is significant integration of all groups, there are identifiable geographic concentrations of some religious groups. The Christian minority is concentrated in the western and southern regions of the country, while groups that practice traditional religions are concentrated in the eastern and southern regions.

A wide variety of foreign missionary groups operate in the country, including Catholics, Protestant denominations, independent missionaries, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion; the Constitution specifically defines the country as a secular state and provides for the free practice of religious beliefs, provided that public that order is maintained.

Religious organizations are independent of the Government and, in practice, administer their affairs without government interference. While individuals and groups may practice their beliefs without government sanction, any group—religious or other—that wants to form an association with legal status must register with the Minister of the Interior in accordance with the civil and commercial code. Registration, which generally is granted, enables an association to conduct business, including owning property, establishing a bank account, and receiving financial contributions from any private source. Registered religious groups, including all registered nonprofit organizations, also are exempt from many forms of taxation. The Minister of Interior must have a legal basis for refusing registration. There were no reports

that any applications for such registration were delayed or denied during the period covered by this report.

Religious organizations can receive direct financial and material assistance from the Government. While there is no official system of government grants, the importance of religion in society often results in the Government providing grants to religious groups to maintain their places of worship or undertake special events. The Government also provides funds through the Ministry of Education to schools operated by religious institutions that meet national education standards. In practice Christian schools, which have a long and successful experience in education, receive the largest share of this government funding.

Because the Constitution provides for separation of religion and state, religious education or worship is not permitted in public schools. Privately owned schools, whether or not they receive government grants, may provide religious education. The majority of students attending Christian schools are Muslims.

Missionaries, like other long-term visitors, must obtain a residence visa issued by the Interior Ministry. Religious groups, including Islamic groups, often establish a presence in the country as nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). NGO's already registered in a foreign country obtain permission to operate in the country from the Minister of the Family, Social Action, and National Solidarity. There were no reports that the Government refused visas or permission to operate to any group. Both religious and nonreligious NGO's are very active in providing social services and administering economic development assistance programs.

The Government encourages and helps organize Muslim participation in the Hajj every year. It also provides similar assistance for an annual Catholic pilgrimage to the Vatican.

While there is no specific government-sponsored institution to promote interfaith dialog, the Government generally seeks to promote religious harmony by maintaining relations with all important religious groups. Senior government officials regularly consult with religious leaders and the Government generally is represented at all major religious festivals or events.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government monitors foreign missionary groups, and religious and nonreligious NGO's, to ensure that their activities coincide with their stated objectives. In the past, the Government expelled groups from the country when their activities were judged to be political in nature and a threat to public order; however, there were no reports that any foreign religious groups were asked to leave the country during the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Religion plays an important role in the lives of most citizens, and society is generally very open to and tolerant of different religious faiths. The country has a long tradition of amicable and tolerant coexistence between the Muslim majority and the Christian, traditional indigenous, and other religious minorities. Interfaith marriage is relatively common. Within certain families, other religious faiths, such as Christianity or a traditional indigenous religion, are practiced alongside Islam.

Islamic communities generally are organized around one of several brotherhoods, headed by a Khalif who is a direct descendant of the group's founder. The two largest and most prominent of these brotherhoods are the Tidjanes, based in the city of Tivouane, and the Mourides, based in the city of Touba. At times there have been disputes within the different brotherhoods over questions of succession or general authority. However, relations between these Islamic subgroups generally have been peaceful and cooperative. In recent years, a National Committee to Coordinate Sightings of the Moon and hence the designation of Muslim holy days has been formed at the suggestion of the Government, effectively increasing cooperation among the Islamic subgroups.

While the brotherhoods are not involved directly in politics or government affairs, these groups exert considerable influence in society and therefore maintain a dialog with political leaders. Close association with a brotherhood, as with any influential community leader, religious or secular, may afford certain political and economic protections and advantages that are not conferred by law. During the legislative election campaign in April 2001, many candidates consulted with and actively

sought the support of Islamic brotherhood leaders; however, no religious leaders of any note issued instructions to their followers to vote for selected candidates. Among the 25 parties contesting the election, only 3 ran on a religion-based platform. None of these three parties garnered more than 0.5 percent of the vote or won a National Assembly seat.

Leaders of the larger religious groups, both Islamic and Christian, long have maintained a public dialog with one another. For example, the former Archbishop who led the country's Catholic community and the Khalifs of the larger Islamic brotherhoods have contributed for decades to a positive interfaith dialog. The Catholic-sponsored Brottier Center has promoted debate and dialog between Muslims and Christians on political and social issues that confront the country.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy maintains relations with all major religious groups in the country. The Ambassador meets with the leaders or their representatives at various times throughout the year to discuss social and political issues. The Embassy maintains contacts with several religious-based NGO's, foreign missionary groups operating in the country, and human rights organizations and activists in order to monitor issues of religious freedom. The Ambassador or his representative regularly attends all major annual religious festivals or gatherings to promote an open dialog with various religious groups.

SEYCHELLES

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of approximately 176 square miles and its population is approximately 81,000. According to figures gathered in the 1994 census, 88 percent of the population are Roman Catholic and 8 percent are Anglican. There are other Christian churches, including Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, the Assembly of God, the Pentecostal Church, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Hinduism, Islam, and the Baha'i Faith also are practiced. Almost 50 percent of the population are estimated to practice their faith regularly. It is unknown if there are atheists in the country.

A few foreign missionary groups practice in the country, including the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic organization.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Seventh-Day Adventist churches and the Islamic mosques each have their own acts of incorporation. The Baha'i local spiritual assembly was incorporated in 1999. Other churches that are not a body corporate are registered as associations with the Registrar General and are entitled to tax-free privileges, similar to a charity. All religious organizations must register in order to be entitled to tax-free privileges. If an organization does not want tax-free privileges, it does not have to register.

The Government tends to remain outside of religious matters, but provides program time to different religious organizations on the national radio broadcasting service. On Sundays a radio broadcast of a Catholic Mass alternates each week with a broadcast of an Anglican service. The Islam and Hindu faiths are allowed 15-

minute broadcasts every Friday, and the Baha'i and Seventh-Day Adventists faiths are allowed 15-minute broadcasts every Saturday.

In March 2000, the Government announced that government employees of the Baha'i faith could take paid leave on Baha'i holy days. This leave had not been available previously to members of the Baha'i or other faiths. At the time of the announcement, the Government also stated that other religions could submit applications for the recognition of similar unpaid leave days. In May 2000, the Government announced that government employees of all faiths could request paid leave on any of their holy days, and such leave generally is granted. President France Albert Rene's wife of 10 years is a member of the Baha'i Faith, while the majority of government ministers are Catholic.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In the past, the Government did not demonstrate favoritism toward one religion over another; however, in early 2000, the Seychelles National Party (SNP), which is the opposition political party and is led by an Anglican minister, claimed that the Government gave a grant of \$164,000 (900,000 Seychelles Rupees) to the Baha'i faith in 1999, following its incorporation. According to the SNP, this grant has not been offered to other faiths that have been established recently in the country. According to the Government, \$192,000 (1 million Seychelles Rupees) of the national budget is allocated to provide assistance to faiths that request it. The grant to the Baha'i faith was for the purpose of building a temple, and in the past, the Anglican, Hindu, and Roman Catholic faiths have benefited from government grants.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are amicable relations among the various religious groups and tolerance for individual religious choice.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SIERRA LEONE

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to the free practice of religion.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 27,653 square miles, and its population is approximately 4.5 million. Reliable data on the exact numbers of those who practice major religions are not available; however, most sources estimate that the population is 60 percent Muslim, 30 percent Christian, and 10 percent practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. There is no information concerning the number of atheists in the country.

Reportedly many syncretistic practices exist, with up to 20 percent of the population practicing a mixture of Islam and traditional indigenous religions or Christianity and traditional indigenous religions.

Historically most Muslims have been concentrated in the northern areas of the country, and Christians were located in the south; however, the ongoing civil war has resulted in movement by major segments of the population.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The Government has no requirements for recognizing, registering, or regulating religious groups.

The Government permits religious instruction in public schools. Students are allowed to choose whether they attend either Muslim- or Christian-oriented classes.

The Government has not taken any specific steps to promote interfaith understanding.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally unrestricted practice of religion.

At the end of the period covered by this report, 60 percent of the country was under the control of rebel forces. There were no reports of restrictions on religious freedom in areas controlled by rebels. Some Roman Catholic clergy in rebel controlled areas were able to continue their work during the period covered by this report.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

While government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion, rebel groups operating in the country committed a number of abuses.

Rebels have targeted Roman Catholic priests and nuns, largely on the assumption that the Church would pay ransom for their return. Some religious leaders were targeted by rebels for their peacekeeping activities as members of civil society, not because of their religion. For example, on July 21, 2000, rebels from the West Side Boys abducted 4 church workers, allegedly because they feared an attack by the Government, and released them after 10 days. On September 7, 2000, Revolutionary United Front insurgents abducted two missionary priests and brought them to Sierra Leone. The priests were not mistreated and were allowed some freedom of movement; they later escaped.

In the past, rebel forces attacked both churches and mosques; however, there were no reports of such attacks during the period covered by this report.

Forced Religious Conversions

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are amicable relations between the various religious communities, and interfaith marriage is common. The Inter-Religious Council (IRC), composed of Christian and Muslim leaders, plays a vital role in civil society and actively participates in efforts to further the peace process. The IRC criticizes the use of force and atrocities committed by the rebels, endorses reconciliation and peace talks, and facilitates rehabilitation of the victims affected by the war, including former child soldiers.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The Ambassador is in frequent contact with the IRC and its individual members.

SOMALIA

There is no constitution and no legal provision for the protection of religious freedom; there were some limits on religious freedom.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. There is no central government; a Transitional National Government is headquartered in Mogadishu, but it exercises little effective control over the rest of the country. Some local administrations, including the "Republic of

Somaliland” and “Puntland,” have made Islam the official religion in their regions. Local tradition and past law make proselytizing a crime for any religion except Islam. Islamic court militias at times administered summary punishments, including executions.

Non-Sunni Muslims often are viewed with suspicion by members of the Sunni majority.

The U.S. Government does not maintain an official presence in the country. The lack of diplomatic representation has limited the U.S. Government’s ability to take action to promote religious freedom.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 246,200 square miles and its population is approximately 7,253,137. Citizens overwhelmingly are Sunni Muslim. There are a small number of non-Sunni Muslims. There also is a small, extremely low-profile Christian community, in addition to small numbers of adherents of other religions. The number of adherents to strains of conservative Islam is growing. In 2000 the number of Islamic schools funded by religiously conservative sources continued to grow (see Section III).

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

There is no constitution and no legal provision for the protection of religious freedom; there were some limits on religious freedom.

There is no central government. A Transitional National Government has been headquartered in Mogadishu since October 2000, but it exercises little effective control over the country. The Transitional Charter, adopted in July 2000 but not implemented by the end of the period covered by this report, establishes Islam as the national religion. Some local administrations, including the “Republic of Somaliland” and “Puntland,” have made Islam the official religion in their regions. The judiciary in most regions relies on some combination of traditional and customary law (Xeer), Shari’a law, the penal code of the pre-1991 Siad Barre government, or some combination of the three. There are three Islamic courts operating in Mogadishu, which are aligned with different subclans, raising doubts about their independence. These courts are administrative bodies that are supported by militias and operate as judicial systems. The Government has established a working relationship with the courts, and over 40 percent of the staff of the Transitional National Government’s police force comes from the courts. In June 2001, Dr. Abdiqasim Salad Hasan, President of the Transitional National Government, announced that the Islamic courts in Mogadishu had been nationalized and would operate under state supervision. Despite the nationalization and the working relationship, the Government does not yet have effective control over the courts.

In March 1999, the Minister of Religion in Somaliland issued a list of instructions and definitions on religious practices. Under the new rules, religious schools and places of worship are required to obtain the Ministry of Religion’s permission to operate. The Ministry must approve entry visas for religious groups, and certain unspecified doctrines are prohibited. In Puntland religious schools and places of worship must receive permission from the Ministry of Justice and Religious Affairs to operate.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Local tradition and past law make proselytizing a crime for any religion except Islam. Proselytizing for any religion except Islam is prohibited by law in Puntland and Somaliland and effectively blocked by informal social consensus elsewhere in the country. Christian-based international relief organizations generally operate without interference, provided that they refrain from proselytizing.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

Article 8 of the Transitional National Charter and Article 6.3 of the Puntland Charter prohibit torture “unless sentenced by Islamic Sharia Courts in accordance with Islamic Sharia law;” however, while Islamic courts generally refrained from administering the stricter Islamic punishments, such as amputation, their militias administered summary punishments, including executions, in and around the city. In June 2000, an Islamic Court in Buulo village, Lower Shabelle, sentenced Nuurto Muhammad Ali to death by stoning after she was discovered to have three husbands. Nuurto’s execution was suspended, and after she gave birth, she was released. In February 2001, the Islamic Court Militias based in Mogadishu flogged

Omar Dini, a reporter for the Mogadishu-based newspaper Qaran, for writing an allegedly anti-Islamic article.

On February 3, 2000, Somaliland authorities briefly detained nine Ethiopian citizens for allegedly proselytizing Christianity; all nine were deported following their release.

Seven Christian Ethiopians arrested in Somaliland in May 1999 for allegedly attempting to proselytize remained in detention at the end of the period covered by this report.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal by local authorities to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Non-Sunni Muslims often are viewed with suspicion by members of the Sunni majority. There is strong social pressure to respect Islamic traditions, especially in enclaves controlled by radical Islamists, such as El Wak in the Gedo region and Doble, Ras Chaimboni, and Kulbiyow in the Lower Juba region. There was an increase in religious intolerance among Muslims by Al'Ittihad, a local radical Islamic group, which is affiliated with the international Al'Ittihad group. There were no reports of mosque takeovers during the period covered by this report.

The number of externally funded Koranic schools continued to increase throughout the country during the period covered by this report. These schools are inexpensive and provide basic education; however, there were reports that these schools required the veiling of small girls, as well as requiring other conservative Islamic practices not normally found in the local culture. Mogadishu University and many secondary schools in Mogadishu are externally funded and administered through organizations affiliated with the conservative Islamic organization Al-Islah.

There is a small, low-profile Christian community. Christians, as well as other non-Muslims who proclaim their religion, sometimes face societal harassment.

There are no ecumenical movements or activities to promote greater religious toleration.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Government does not maintain an official presence in the country. This lack of diplomatic representation has limited the U.S. Government's ability to take action to promote religious freedom.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom; however, there is a concern among some Christians about the perceived growing influence of Islam. Reports of violence perpetrated by the People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD) have fueled these concerns.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 470,462 square miles and its population is approximately 43,680,000. According to the 1996 census, approximately 87 percent of the population adhere to the Christian faith. Approximately 3 percent of the population indicated that they belong to other religions, including traditional indigenous religions, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Rastafarianism. Approximately 9 percent of the population indicated that they belong to no particular religion or refused to indicate their affiliation.

The African Independent Churches make up the largest grouping of Christian Churches. There are 4,000 or more African Independent Churches, with a total

membership of more than 10 million persons. Although these churches originally were founded as breakaways from various mission churches (the so-called Ethiopian churches), the African Independent Churches consist mostly of Zionist or apostolic churches and also include some Pentecostal offshoots. The Zion Christian Church is the largest African Independent Church. The African Independent Churches attract persons from rural and urban areas.

The Nederduits Gereformeerde, or Dutch Reformed, family of churches consists of 3 related churches that represent almost 4 million persons. The Nederduits Gereformeerde Church is the largest of these 3 churches with a total of 1,263 congregations. Its member churches are the United Reformed Church of South Africa and the small Reformed Church in Africa, whose members predominantly are Indian. The Nederduitsch Hervormde and Gereformeerde Churches also are regarded as part of the Dutch Reformed Church family. In recent years, there has been a move away from the Dutch Reformed churches by Afrikaners to charismatic and Baptist churches.

Other established Christian churches include the Roman Catholic Church, which has grown steadily in numbers and influence in recent years and consists of approximately 8.6 percent of the population; the Methodist Church (7 percent); the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican, 4 percent); various Lutheran (2.6 percent) and Presbyterian churches (1.8 percent); and the Congregational Church (1 percent). Although they consist of slightly more than 1 percent of the population, the Baptist churches represent a strong church tradition. The largest traditional Pentecostal churches are the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Assemblies of God, and the Full Gospel Church. A number of charismatic churches have been established in recent years. The subsidiary churches of the charismatic churches, together with those of the Hatfield Christian Church in Pretoria, are grouped in the International Fellowship of Christian Churches. The Greek Orthodox and Seventh-Day Adventist Churches also are active.

Approximately 9 percent of the total population claim no affiliation with any formal religious organization. The majority of these persons adhere to traditional indigenous religions. A common feature of the traditional indigenous religions is the importance of ancestors. Ancestors are regarded as part of the community and as indispensable links with the spirit world and the powers that control everyday affairs. Ancestors are not gods, but because they play a key part in bringing about either good or ill fortune, maintaining good relations with them is vital. Followers of traditional indigenous religions also believe that certain practitioners can manipulate the power of the spirits by applying elaborate procedures that are passed down through word-of-mouth. Some practitioners use herbs and other therapeutic techniques; others claim supernatural powers. As a result of close contact with Christianity, many persons find themselves in a transitional phase somewhere between traditional indigenous religions and Christianity.

Nearly half of Indians are Hindus, and the remainder is either Muslim (23 percent) or Christian (20 percent), with a small number of followers of various other religions. The Jewish population is less than 100,000 persons; of these the majority are Orthodox Jews. There has been a slight shift towards the Muslim faith by blacks.

Churches are well attended in both rural and urban areas, and most are staffed adequately by a large number of clerics and officials.

A number of Christian organizations, including the Salvation Army, Promise Keepers, Operation Mobilization, Campus Crusade, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, operate in the country doing missionary work, giving aid, and providing training. The Muslim World League also is active in the country, as is the Zionist International Federation.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. The Bill of Rights prohibits the State from unfairly discriminating directly or indirectly against anyone on the ground of religion, and it states that persons belonging to a religious community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community, to practice their religion and to form, join, and maintain religious associations. Cases of discrimination against a person on the grounds of religious freedom can be taken to the Constitutional Court.

Christianity is the dominant religion in the country, but no religion is declared the official state religion by law. The ruling party favors no religion in particular

and leading members of this party belong to at least three church groupings (Zionist Christian, Roman Catholic, and Methodist churches), in addition to other non-Christian faiths.

Religious groups are not required to be licensed or registered.

The Constitution states that religious instruction at public schools is permitted so long as it is voluntary and religions are treated equally. The current syllabus allows local boards to decide whether to include religious instruction in their schools. Many public schools have dropped religious instruction in practice. In schools that do administer religious instruction, students have the right not to attend the religious instruction, and school authorities respect this right in practice. There are some private religious schools in which religious instruction is required.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

In February 2001, nine pupils were suspended from their high school for wearing dreadlocks. The students claimed that they subscribed to Rastafarianism as a religion, which they claimed requires that adherents grow their hair. The Department of Education allowed the children back into the school and stated that the Department would allow pupils wearing dreadlocks to attend school, if they were members of the Rastafarian religion. The Department asked the school to launch an investigation to determine whether the children were Rastafari in fact.

In November 2000, a candidate attorney asked the Constitutional Court to rule that adult Rastafari should be exempted from the application of statutory provisions that make the possession and use of cannabis illegal and subject to a fine or imprisonment, because the use of cannabis is considered to be part of the practice of Rastafarianism. The candidate attorney was refused admission in 1997 as an attorney on the grounds of convictions for possession and use of cannabis, which is an offence in the country. The Western Cape Director of Public Prosecution has opposed the candidate attorney's application, due to the link between cannabis and violent crime in that province. The case was heard on May 17, 2001, and the judgement was pending at the end of the period covered by this report.

On March 21, 2001, approximately 500,000 persons attended a gathering at Newlands Rugby Stadium in Cape Town that was organized by Christian groups and endorsed by 600 Christian leaders to promote unifying the city and addressing unacceptable levels of crime, violence, poverty, bombings, gangsterism, and drug trafficking through celebration and prayer for divine intervention through the power of gospel. Education Minister Kader Asmal, who spoke at an African National Congress (ANC) gathering in nearby Langa, criticized the gathering as sectarian, divisive, and non-inclusive. Asmal also claimed that a day of great importance, such as Human Rights Day, had been used by the organizers to promote a particular religious viewpoint, rather than the philosophy of the day. Religious leaders, opposition parties, and the media criticized Asmal's comments and accused him, and by extension the ANC, of disrespecting the rights of freedom of association. Asmal apologized repeatedly for his comments, stated that in no way is he opposed to Christianity, and affirmed his commitment to religious freedom.

During the 1998/1999 licensing season, the Independent Broadcasting Authority's Broadcasting Monitoring Complaints Committee found the Muslim Community Radio Station, Radio Islam, guilty of violating its license conditions because, among other things, it refused to allow women to speak on the air. In March 2001, the station applied for and was granted a 12-month temporary license because of compliance with license conditions. The station now has women on its board and also on the air.

Members of the group PAGAD complained that they were the targets of police brutality. PAGAD is an Islamic-oriented community-based organization that engaged in acts of intimidation and violence against some suspected drug dealers, gang leaders, and critics of PAGAD's violent vigilantism, including anti-PAGAD Muslim clerics, academics, and business leaders. PAGAD's earlier tactics of mass marches and drive-by shootings largely have been replaced by pipe-bomb attacks. There was no indication that police targeted PAGAD members for investigation because of their religious affiliation. Some religious communities believe that the Government is too lenient in regards to PAGAD.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the various religious communities generally are amicable; however, there is a concern among some Christians about the perceived growing influence of Islam. Reports of violence perpetrated by PAGAD have fueled these concerns.

PAGAD portrays itself as a community organization opposed to crime, gangsterism, and drugs; however, it is known for its violent vigilantism (see Section II). PAGAD also claims to be a multifaith movement, although its orientation is Islamic and the vast majority of its members are Muslim. PAGAD is most active in the Western Cape, but also has branches elsewhere in the country. Surveys indicated that some two-thirds of Muslims supported PAGAD soon after its inception in 1995, but that figure has dropped significantly since; the vast majority of Muslims no longer support PAGAD. While PAGAD continues to lose support when it is linked to violent acts, it gains sympathy whenever high-profile incidents occur that are perceived by the Muslim community to have been acts of discrimination against Muslims.

PAGAD has been influenced heavily by Qibla, a radical Islamic-based political group created in 1979 to promote the establishment of an Islamic state in South Africa. Qibla is organized into cells in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, and its membership is thought to number only a few hundred persons. Qibla leaders dominate the Islamic Unity Convention, an umbrella body formed in 1994 that claims to represent more than 200 small Muslim organizations.

Urban terrorism increased in the Western Cape during the period covered by this report. A trial was ongoing at the end of the period covered by this report in the Cape High Court, in which 3 PAGAD members face 138 charges linked to urban terrorism in Cape Town in the past 5 years. On May 14, 2001, another trial began in Cape High Court against five PAGAD members accused of public violence, attempted murder, and murder, including the murder of gang leader Rashaad Staggie. The five members are being prosecuted for events that took place in 1996. The trial was ongoing at the end of the period covered by this report. PAGAD also has been linked to plans to kill court presiding officers, prosecutors, and witnesses. In September 2000, magistrate Pieter Theron, who was hearing a case against PAGAD members, was killed in a drive-by shooting outside of his home in Cape Town. In December 2000, two prosecution witnesses in a case against PAGAD members were killed.

In January 1997, a mosque in Rustenberg was struck in a series of bombings that also struck a post office and general store and injured two persons. Three individuals were convicted of these attacks and in March 2001, were sentenced to 10 to 13 years in prison. They appealed the sentences, but the appeal was not heard by the end of the period covered by this report.

The trial of four suspects in the 1998 bombing of a synagogue in Wynberg has been postponed until September 2001.

There were occasional reports of killings linked to the continued practice of witchcraft in some rural areas. In the Northern Province, where traditional beliefs regarding witchcraft remain strong, officials reported dozens of killings of persons suspected of witchcraft. The Government has instituted educational programs to prevent such actions.

There are many official and unofficial bilateral and multilateral ecumenical contacts between the various churches. The largest of these is the South African Council of Churches (SACC), which represents the Methodist Church, the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican), various Lutheran and Presbyterian churches, and the Congregational Church, among others. The major traditional indigenous religions, most of the Afrikaans-language churches, and the Pentecostal and charismatic churches are not members of the SACC and usually have their own coordinating and liaison bodies. The Roman Catholic Church's relationship with other churches is becoming more relaxed, and it works closely with other churches on the socio-political front.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Representatives of the U.S. Embassy have frequent contact with leaders and members of all religious communities in the country.

SUDAN

The Constitution, implemented in early 1999, provides for freedom of religion; however, the Government severely restricts this right in practice. The Government treats Islam as the state religion and has declared that it must inspire the country's laws, institutions, and policies.

The status of respect for religious freedom has not changed fundamentally in recent years. The Government continued to enforce numerous restrictions. Authorities continued to restrict the activities of Christians, followers of traditional indigenous religions, and other non-Muslims as well as some Islamic groups. Non-Muslims are forbidden to proselytize, and apostasy, the conversion from Islam to Christianity, is a capital offense. The Government restricted large religious assemblies, and visas of Catholic priests were not renewed expeditiously. The Government's treatment of Islam as the state religion creates an atmosphere in which non-Muslims are treated as second class citizens. There continued to be reports that security forces harassed and arrested persons for religious beliefs and activities. During the ongoing civil war, the Government and government-supported forces have been responsible for indiscriminate bombings, the burning and looting of villages, and the killings, abductions, rapes, and arbitrary arrests and detentions of civilians, most of whom were Christians or practitioners of traditional indigenous religions.

Traditionally there have been amicable relations between the various religious communities; however, violence between rival Muslim groups resulted in the deaths of 26 persons.

The U.S. Government's efforts in the country have been limited by the non-resident status of U.S. diplomats prior to August 1998 and by the evacuation of the Embassy's American staff in August 1998. Nonresident American diplomats resumed visits to Khartoum in late February 2000. The U.S. Government has made it clear to the Government that the problem of religious freedom is one of the key impediments to an improvement in the relationship between Sudan and the U.S. The issue of religious freedom has been raised consistently with both the Government and the populace by high-level U.S. officials and U.S. Missions to international forums. In September 1999 and again in September 2000, the Secretary of State designated Sudan a country of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 1,556,108 square miles, and its population is 35,079,814. Sudan is a religiously mixed country, although Muslims have dominated national government institutions since independence. There are no accurate figures on the sizes of the country's religious populations. More than 75 percent of the population are Muslim, and adherents include numerous Arabic and non-Arabic groups. Muslims predominate in the north. There are sizable minorities of Christians and practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. Most citizens in the south adhere to either Christianity or traditional indigenous religions. There are reliable reports that Christianity is growing rapidly in the south, particularly in areas outside of government control. There also is evidence that many new converts to Christianity continue to adhere to elements of traditional indigenous practices. The influx of 1 to 2 million southerners displaced by the war has brought sizable communities of practitioners of traditional indigenous religions and Christians to the north. There also are small but influential and long established populations of Greek Orthodox and Coptic Rite Christians centered around Khartoum. Approximately 500,000 Coptic Christians live in the north. There are a few atheists and agnostics in the country, but exact figures are not available.

The Muslim population is almost entirely Sunni but is divided into many different groups. The most significant divisions occur along the lines of the Sufi brotherhood. Two popular brotherhoods, the Ansar and the Khatimia, are associated closely with the Umma Party and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), respectively.

Northern Muslims form a majority of the population, and government institutions are dominated by northern Muslims, who speak Arabic. The southern ethnic groups fighting the civil war (largely followers of traditional indigenous religions or Christians and largely of African origin) seek independence, autonomy, or some other form of regional self-determination from the north.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution, implemented in early 1999, provides for freedom of religion; however, the Government severely restricts this right in practice. The Government treats Islam as the state religion and has declared that it must inspire the country's laws, institutions, and policies. The Constitution states that "Shari'a and custom are the sources of legislation."

Religious organizations are subject to the 1994 Societies Registration Act. The Act theoretically allows churches to engage in a wide range of activities, but subjects churches to the same restrictions placed on nonreligious corporations. Religious groups, like all other organizations, must be registered in order to be recognized or to gather legally. The Government also requires that the construction of houses of worship be approved, and the Government continued to deny permission for the construction of Roman Catholic churches. Registered religious groups are exempt from most taxes. Nonregistered religious groups, on the other hand, find it impossible to construct a place of worship or to assemble legally. Registration reportedly is very difficult to obtain in practice, and the Government does not treat all groups equally in the approval of such registrations and licenses. The Government reportedly is working on new legislation to replace the Societies Registration Act, but has not yet invited the participation of religious groups in drafting the legislation.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Authorities continued to restrict the activities of Christians, followers of traditional indigenous beliefs, and other non-Muslims, as well as certain Islamic groups.

While non-Muslims may convert to Islam, the 1991 Criminal Act makes apostasy (which includes conversion from Islam to another religion) punishable by death.

Muslims may proselytize freely in government-controlled areas, but non-Muslims are forbidden to proselytize. Missionaries continued to do other work, and a wide range of Christian missionary groups operated in both government and rebel-controlled areas of the country. However, authorities sometimes harassed foreign missionaries and other religiously oriented organizations and delayed their requests for work permits and residence visas. For example, during the latter half of 2000, the Government refused to renew the visas of several Catholic missionaries who had been residents for long periods of time, forcing them to leave the country; the missionaries were able to re-apply for the visas while outside the country and they were subsequently granted. The Government generally is less restrictive of Christian groups that historically have had a presence in the country, including Copts, Roman Catholics, and Greek Orthodox, and is more restrictive of newer arrivals.

While the Government permits non-Muslims to participate in services in existing, authorized places of worship, the Government continued to deny permission for the construction of any Roman Catholic churches, although some other Christian groups have received permission. However, the Government permitted some makeshift structures to be used for Roman Catholic services.

There is a longstanding dispute between the Episcopal Church and the Government. In September 1999, the Episcopal Church stated that the Government had moved to seize a portion of the property on which the church office in Omdurman stands; however, the Government did not seize the property, and the parties continued negotiations to resolve the dispute during the period covered by this report. A government-run health care center had operated on the site since 1973. The Church claimed that it has a freehold title to the land, while the Government claimed that the land is leased. The Church claimed that the courts would not act independently of the Government in the case. The Church sent a memo to the Office of the President concerning the issue, but the President's Office replied that it did not have authority over the case because it was a state rather than a federal issue. At a June 19, 2000, court session, a decision on the matter was postponed until August 2000. There was no further information available on the case by the end of the period covered by this report.

In 1996 an Episcopal church was built in the Fetehab neighborhood of Omdurman. In 1998 local residents filed a case against the church for disturbances, and the authorities closed the church as a result. The case was forwarded to the Attorney General, but no decision had been issued on this matter by the end of the period covered by this report. Reportedly the Episcopal church tried to resolve the conflict by applying to state authorities for approval to build another church in a different location; however, the state authorities did not grant such approval.

The Khartoum State government in past years had razed some religious buildings and thousands of squatter dwellings around Khartoum, which largely were populated by displaced southerners, including large numbers of practitioners of tradi-

tional indigenous religions and Christians; however, this practice largely had ceased by the end of the period covered by this report. Earlier improvements in procedures to grant squatters legal title to land in other areas and to move squatters in advance of demolitions continued. In October 1999, the First Vice President directed that demolition of churches and other Christian facilities in Khartoum be suspended and that a committee be formed under the Second Vice President to review the issue. Some church officials indicated that the number of church and school demolitions in squatter areas declined, apparently because the replanning of squatter areas largely is complete. However, at the end of the period covered by this report, the Government was trying to take over the unused part of a Christian cemetery in Khartoum in order to build shops; the dispute remained unresolved.

Although the Government considers itself an Islamic government, restrictions often are placed on the religious freedoms of Muslims, particularly on those orders linked to opposition to the Government. Although in past years there were reports that Islamic orders such as the Ansar and the Khatimia regularly were denied permission to hold large public gatherings, these orders were allowed to meet as religious but not as political organizations during the period covered by this report.

Religious minority rights are not protected, and Islam is the state religion; this confers a status of second class citizenship on non-Muslim adherents. In government-controlled areas of the south, there continued to be credible evidence of favoritism towards Muslims and an unwritten policy of Islamization of public institutions, despite an official policy of local autonomy and federalism. Some non-Muslims lost their jobs in the civil service, the judiciary, and other professions; however, such occurrences were less frequent during the period covered by this report than in previous years. Few non-Muslim university graduates found government jobs. Some non-Muslim businessmen complained of petty harassment and discrimination in the awarding of government contracts and trade licenses. There also were reports that Muslims received preferential treatment for the limited services provided by the Government, including access to medical care.

The Government requires instruction in Islam in public schools in the north. In public schools in areas in which Muslims are not a majority, students have a choice of studying Islam or Christianity; however, Christian courses are not offered in the majority of public schools, ostensibly due to a lack of teachers or Christian students; in practice this means that many Christian students attend Islamic courses.

There were continued reports that Christian secondary school students in Khartoum were not allowed to continue their compulsory military service because they attended church. For example, in June 2000, approximately 100 Christian secondary students were not allowed to continue compulsory military service because they left their duties to attend religious services. Students who do not complete military service are not permitted to enter the University.

Sunday is not recognized as the Sabbath for Christians. Employers sometimes prevent Christians in the north from leaving work to worship.

Certain provisions of Islamic law as interpreted and applied by the Government, and many traditional practices as well, discriminate against women. In accordance with Islamic law, a Muslim woman has the right to hold and dispose of her own property without interference, and women are ensured inheritance from their parents. However, a daughter inherits half the share of a son, and a widow inherits a smaller percentage than do her children. It is much easier for men to initiate legal divorce proceedings than for women. Islamic family law applies to Muslims and not to those of other faiths, for whom religious or tribal laws apply. Although a Muslim man may marry a non-Muslim, a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim unless he converts to Islam; however, this prohibition is not observed or enforced in areas of the south not controlled by the Government, nor among Nubans.

Children who have been abandoned or whose parentage is unknown, regardless of presumed religious origin, are considered by the State to be both citizens and Muslims and can be adopted only by Muslims. Non-Muslims may adopt only other non-Muslim children. No equivalent restriction is placed on the adoption by Muslims of orphans or other children. In accordance with Islamic law, children adopted by Muslims do not take the name of their adopted parents and are not automatic heirs to their property.

Various government bodies have decreed on different occasions that women must dress modestly according to Islamic standards, including wearing a head covering. In January 1999, the governor of Khartoum State announced that women in public places and government offices, and female students and teachers would be required to conform to what is considered an Islamic dress code. However, none of these decrees have been the subject of legislation. There was minimal enforcement of the dress code during the period covered by this report. Women often were seen in public wearing trousers or with their heads uncovered. Public Order police generally

only issued warnings for improper dress. In September 2000, the governor of Khartoum State issued a decree forbidding women from working in businesses that serve the public, such as hotels, restaurants, and gas stations. He defended the ban as necessary under Shari'a (Islamic law) to protect the dignity of women. At the end of the period covered by this report, the Constitutional Court was considering a case challenging the constitutionality of the decree.

In rebel-controlled areas, Christians, Muslims, and followers of traditional indigenous beliefs generally worship freely, although it appears that many of the region's Muslim residents have departed voluntarily over the years. The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) officially favors secular government; however, the movement is dominated by Christians, and local SPLM authorities often have a very close relationship with local Christian religious authorities. There is no evidence that this close relationship has resulted in a failure to respect the rights of practitioners of other religions.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

There were a few reports that security forces regularly harassed and at times used threats and violence against persons because of their religious beliefs and activities; however, such reports decreased during the period covered by this report.

In April 2001, Christian church authorities invited a German evangelist to address a rally in central Khartoum to celebrate Easter Mass and secured appropriate permits for the rally. On April 10, 2001, government authorities ordered church authorities to move the event to a venue that had insufficient space and was located on the outskirts of Khartoum in an area surrounded by mosques on the grounds that Islamic groups had made threats to disrupt the event. The leaders of the Episcopal Church and the Sudanese Council of Churches responded by sending a joint protest letter to the Government calling for the investigation of unfair treatment of Christians. On April 11, 2001, clashes broke out at the All Saints Cathedral between the police and demonstrators who were protesting the government order to move the event. Police fired at the protesters and used tear gas and truncheons to disperse them. There also were reports that hand grenades were used inside the Cathedral. Authorities arrested approximately 100 individuals, including Christian clergymen and charged them with public disturbance. After summary trials in April 2001, 53 demonstrators, including women and children, were flogged and some were imprisoned for up to 20 days.

In past years, Human Rights Watch reported that Islamic student militias operating under the protection of security forces abducted and tortured a number of student activists. During the period covered by this report, Islamic students harassed, beat, and otherwise abused non-Sudanese African students; part of the motivation for such acts appeared to be religious.

The Government officially exempts the 10 southern states, in which the population is mostly non-Muslim, from parts of the Criminal Act. The Act permits physical punishments, including lashings, amputations, and stonings, based on Shari'a (Islamic law). In a 1999 case involving ethnic clashes in the Darfur region in the west, an emergency court sentenced 10 persons to hanging and subsequent crucifixion. These sentences were not carried out by the end of the period covered by this report. In late 1999 and early 2000 in the north, the Government reportedly carried out amputations under Islamic law for the first time; there were reports that between five and ten cross amputations (right hand and left foot) were carried out during the period covered by this report. The Government carried out three amputations as punishment for violent crimes that resulted in death. All those sentenced to amputations reportedly were Muslims. There were no reports of court-ordered Islamic law punishments, other than lashings, in government-controlled areas of the south. The act legally can be applied in the south, if the state assemblies approve it. Fear of the imposition of Islamic law is one of the factors that has fueled support for the civil war among opposition forces in the south.

In June 2000, approximately 100 Christian secondary school students who had been training at a police unit in Jebel Awlia province in Khartoum State, said that they were abused physically and insulted by the police during the exercise. They claimed to be among 231 Christians out of 1,200 students at the camp. It was unclear if these students were abused because they were Christian, and the national service coordination office in Khartoum State reportedly denied that there was a problem at the training camps. The students were not allowed to continue their compulsory military education because they left their duties to attend church.

Unlike in previous years, Catholic priests did not report that they routinely were stopped and harassed by police during the period covered by this report. Security forces detained persons because of their religious beliefs and activities; however, such detentions on religious grounds occurred less frequently during the period cov-

ered by this report than in previous years. Generally detentions based nominally on religion were of limited duration; because the practice of religion is not technically illegal, detainees could not be held formally on religious grounds indefinitely. Although in the past there were reports that the Government resorted to accusing, at times falsely, those arrested for religious reasons of other crimes, including common crimes and national security crimes, which resulted in prolonged detention, there were no reports of such occurrences during the period covered by this report.

In December 2000, the Government arrested and detained 65 leading members of the Takfeer and Hijra group following an attack on a rival group's worshippers (see Section III); most of the individuals remained in detention and had not been tried by the end of the period covered by this report.

In September 2000, security forces briefly detained 25 women who participated in a National Democratic Women's Association demonstration protesting the governor of Khartoum's decree prohibiting women from working in hotels, restaurants, and gas stations.

Since the civil war resumed in 1983, an estimated 2 million persons have been killed in the violence or have died from the effects of the drought; 4 million have been displaced internally as a result of fighting between the Government and insurgents in the south. Despite limited ceasefires, the civil war continued during the period covered by this report, and all sides involved in the fighting were responsible for abuses in violation of humanitarian norms. Government and government-supported forces in particular were responsible for the majority of the killings, abductions, rapes, and arbitrary arrests and detentions of civilians, and for the burning and looting of villages. There is a religious aspect to the civil war: the Government is dominated by northern Muslims, while the southern ethnic groups fighting the civil war largely are followers of traditional indigenous religions or Christians. The Government has declared a "jihad" (Muslim holy war) against the southern rebels. One of the major factors in the continuation of the war is the Government refusal to agree to the SPLM's demand for a unified secular state.

As part of the civil war, the Government has engaged in a program of high altitude, indiscriminate bombing of southern areas, particularly in the states of Equatoria, Western Upper Nile, and the Nuba Mountains. The bombings hit schools, medical facilities, markets, and civilian buildings in these areas inhabited primarily by Christians and practitioners of traditional African religions. For example, in April 2001, Sudanese Air Force bombers attacked an airstrip in the Nuba Mountains and narrowly missed hitting a plane carrying Bishop Macram Max Gassis of El Obeid Diocese in the central part of the country.

The forced abduction of women and children and the taking of slaves, particularly in war zones, and their transport to parts of central and northern Sudan, continued. The victims in part were targeted because of their religious beliefs. There were credible reports that Baggara raiders, armed and reportedly supported by the Government, attacked villages in the Bahr al Ghazal region, taking a number of persons, almost exclusively women and children, as slaves. The victims in the villages were largely Christians or practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. Militia and Baggara raids occurred during the period covered by this report. Although the Government's Commission to End the Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWAC) pledged to end slavery in the country, raids nevertheless continued.

In July 2000, at a bus station in Hilla Kuku, a Catholic worker was abducted by unidentified men, reportedly security personnel, and taken to an unidentified house. He was kept in a chair, with his hands tied behind his back, and questioned about church activities. He was released after dark but warned not to discuss the incident.

Forced Religious Conversion

Some children from Christian and other non-Muslim families, captured and sold into slavery, were converted forcibly to Islam.

The Popular Defense Forces (PDF) trainees, including non-Muslims, were indoctrinated in the Islamic faith. In prisons and juvenile detention facilities, government officials and government-supported Islamic non-governmental organizations (NGO's) pressured and offered inducements to non-Muslim inmates to convert. Some persons in the government-controlled camps for internally displaced persons reported that they were subject to forced labor and at times pressured to convert to Islam. Children, including non-Muslim children, in camps for vagrant minors were required to study the Koran, and there was pressure on non-Muslims to convert to Islam. There were credible reports that some boys in vagrant camps and juvenile homes have undergone forced circumcision.

There were no reports of the forced religious conversion of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Traditionally, there have been amicable relations between the various religious communities. However, in December 2000, supporters of the outlawed Takfeer and Hijra Muslim groups attacked a rival Muslim group's worshipers at a Sunni mosque in Omdurman during Ramadan prayers, killing 26 persons and injuring 40 others (see Section II).

There are reports that Islamic NGO's in war zones withhold other services, such as medical and food aid, from the needy unless they convert to Islam. There also were reports that Christian NGO's used their services to pressure persons to convert to Christianity.

Leaders of religious communities meet informally to discuss community relations.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Government's efforts in the country have been limited by the non-resident status of U.S. diplomats prior to August 1998 and by the evacuation of the Embassy's American staff in August 1998. Nonresident American diplomats resumed visits to Khartoum in late February 2000. Nonetheless the U.S. Government and the U.S. Embassy, whose American staff is based in Nairobi and Cairo, have continued to make efforts to encourage respect for religious freedom. The U.S. Government has made it clear to the Government that the problem of religious freedom is one of the key impediments to developing a more positive relationship between the country and the United States. The Embassy consistently raised the issue at all levels of government, including with the Foreign Minister. When present in Khartoum, representatives of the Embassy regularly meet with leaders of the religious communities in the country.

The Embassy and the Department of State forcefully raised religious freedom issues publicly in press statements and at international forums, including the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

In September 1999, and again in September 2000, the Secretary of State designated Sudan a country of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

SWAZILAND

There are no formal constitutional provisions for freedom of religion; however, the Government generally respects freedom of religion in practice, although there are a few restrictions.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. On two occasions, the authorities cancelled prayer meetings on political grounds and on one occasion forcibly dispersed a community prayer service. In addition school authorities refused to allow six students to attend school on the grounds that their beliefs as members of Jehovah's Witnesses would incite other students to be disrespectful; the students were later reinstated by a court order.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of approximately 6,700 square miles and its population is approximately 1,100,000. Christianity is the dominant religion. Zionism is a blend of Christianity and indigenous ancestral worship and is the prominent religion in rural areas. A large Roman Catholic presence, including churches, schools, and other infrastructure, continues to flourish. It is estimated that the population is 40 percent Zionist, 20 percent Roman Catholic, and 10 percent Islamic, with the remaining 30 percent divided between Anglican, Methodist, Baha'i, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Jewish, and other beliefs. Followers of Islam and the Baha'i Faith generally are located in urban areas. There are few atheists in the country.

Missionaries inspired much of the country's early development and still play a role in rural development. Missionaries mostly are western Christians, including Baptists, Mormons, evangelicals, and other Christians. Baha'is are one of the most active non-Christian groups in the country.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

There are no formal constitutional provisions for freedom of religion; however, the Government generally respects freedom of religion in practice, although authorities on occasion disrupted or cancelled prayer meetings.

New religious groups or churches are expected to register with the Government upon organizing in the country. In order to be considered organized, a religious group or church must demonstrate either possession of substantial cash reserves or financial support from outside religious groups with established ties to western or eastern religions. For indigenous religious groups or churches, authorities consider demonstration of a proper building, a pastor or religious leader, and a congregation as sufficient to grant organized status. However, there is no law describing the organizational requirements of a religious group or church. While organized churches are exempt from paying taxes, they are not considered tax-deductible charities. All religions are recognized unofficially.

Portions of the capital city are zoned specifically for church buildings of all denominations. Those religious groups that wish to construct new buildings may purchase a plot and apply for the required building permits. The Government had not restricted any religion with financial means from building a place of worship; non-Christian groups sometimes experience minor delays in obtaining permits from the Government to build residences.

While the Government primarily observes Christian holidays, the monarchy (and by extension the Government) supports many religious activities in addition to Easter and Christmas. For example, the royal family occasionally attends evangelical programs.

The Government neither restricts nor formally promotes interfaith dialog, and it does not provide formal mechanisms for religions to reconcile differences. Churches have access to the courts as private entities.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Followers of all religious faiths generally are free to worship without government interference or restriction; however, on August 26 and September 3, 2000, police cancelled two prayer meetings on the grounds that the meetings had political overtones.

During the period covered by this report, there was a dispute regarding the reinstatement of six children who are members of Jehovah's Witnesses at a primary school. An April 13, 2001, order by the High Court reinstated the six students, who were expelled for not obeying school rules and regulations because of their beliefs as Jehovah's Witnesses. The students were allowed to return to school, and parents and school authorities were addressing the issue.

Non-Christian groups sometimes experience minor delays in obtaining permits from the Government.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

On September 9, 2000, police used force to disperse a community prayer service just as an opposition leader rose to address the meeting. Police fired tear gas canisters and rubber bullets into the crowd; 2 individuals were wounded by rubber bullets and 60 persons were treated for minor injuries.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Religious diversity is respected. Five different denominations maintain adjoining properties peacefully. There was no public conflict among faiths during the period covered by this report.

The Christian churches are well organized and are divided into three groups: the Council of Churches, the League of Churches, and the Conference of Churches. Each of these bodies represents all of the Christian denominations in the country, and they primarily engage in producing common statements on political issues and sharing radio production facilities, or engage in common rural development and missionary strategies. Each organization has strong public opinions, which sometimes differ from one another; however, on several occasions, they have come together to

address common issues, such as a constitutional amendment allowing for freedom of religion.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The Embassy maintains contact and good relations with the various religious organizations.

TANZANIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice, subject to measures that it claims are necessary to ensure public order and safety; however, there were a few limits on this right.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. Some urban Muslim groups are sensitive to perceived discrimination in government hiring and law enforcement practices.

Generally there are stable relations between the various religious communities; however, there is some tension between Muslims and Christians, and some tension between secular and fundamentalist Muslims.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 364,900 square miles and its population is approximately 35 million. Religious leaders and sociologists generally believe that the country's population is 30 to 40 percent Christian, 30 to 40 percent Muslim, and that the remainder is comprised of practitioners of other faiths, traditional indigenous religions, and atheists. Zanzibar, which accounts for 2.5 percent of the country's population, is 98 percent Muslim. Current statistics on religious demography are unavailable, as religious surveys were eliminated from all government census reports after 1967. The Christian population is comprised of Roman Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) and Jehovah's Witnesses. Between 80 to 90 percent of the Muslim population is Sunni, with the remainder comprised of several Shi'a groups.

Foreign missionaries operate in the country, including Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Mormon, Anglican, and Muslim.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice, subject to measures that it claims are necessary to ensure public order and safety; however, there were a few limits on this right.

The Government requires that religious organizations register with the Registrar of Societies at the Home Affairs Ministry. In order to register, religious organizations must have at least 10 followers and must provide a constitution, the resumes of their leaders, and a letter of recommendation from their district commissioner. Groups no longer are required to provide three letters of recommendation from the leaders of registered Christian churches or from registered mosques; however, some Muslim groups claim that they still are required to submit a letter of recommendation from BAKWATA, the National Muslim Council of Tanzania. There were no reports that the Government refused the registration of any group.

Prior to 2000, religious groups were exempt from paying taxes because they were presumed to be nonprofit organizations. The Government discovered in 1998 that some religious groups were importing goods duty-free and then selling them for a profit and began requiring these groups to pay taxes. After successfully identifying these organizations, the Government allowed legitimate religious groups to order goods internationally without paying duty, provided that they receive an exemption certificate from the Tanzania Revenue Authority.

Customary or statutory law in both civil and criminal matters governs Christians. Muslims may apply either customary law or Islamic law in civil matters; Islamic law is applicable only in Zanzibar. Zanzibar's court system generally parallels the mainland's legal system but retains Islamic courts to adjudicate cases of Muslim

family law, such as divorce, child custody, and inheritance. Islamic courts only adjudicate cases involving Muslims.

Missionaries are permitted to enter the country freely, particularly if proselytizing is ancillary to other religious activities. Citizens are permitted to go abroad for pilgrimages and other religious practices.

In 1998 the Government dissolved its national and regional parole boards after complaints that they did not include Muslim members, even though the majority of the prison population is Muslim. The boards were reconstituted in February 1999 with a more religiously diverse membership. The results of the Government's investigation into allegations that the National Muslim Council was receiving money from abroad were not made public by the end of the period covered by this report.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The law prohibits preaching or distribution of materials that are considered inflammatory and represent a threat to the public order. In July 2000, the Government banned the publication and distribution of a book by a Muslim academic on the grounds that it was inflammatory. The book, titled "The Mwembechai Killings," described Muslim grievances against the Government and provided the author's version of events surrounding the killings of three Muslim protesters in 1998 in the Mwembechai area of Dar es Salaam. During the period covered by this report, urban Muslims distributed videotapes of the Mwembechai riots to document perceived human rights abuses; these videotapes were outlawed by the Government for being incendiary.

The Government has banned religious organizations from involvement in politics, and politicians are banned from using language designed to incite one religious group against another or to encourage religious groups to vote for certain political parties. In July 2000, Parliament passed a law that imposes fines and jail time on political parties that campaign in houses of worship or educational facilities. In September 2000, BAKWATA closed a school in Singida for holding meetings to campaign for the Civic United Front (CUF) on its grounds. The school was reopened, and the persons who were involved in the campaigning were expelled from the administration of the school.

The Government does not designate religion on any passports or records of vital statistics; however, it does require an individual's religion to be stated on police reports, school registration forms, and applications for medical care.

Government policy forbids discrimination against any individual on the basis of religious beliefs or practices; however, individual government officials are alleged to favor persons who share the same religion in the conduct of business. The Muslim community claims to be disadvantaged in terms of its representation in the civil service, government, and parastatal institutions, in part because both colonial and early post-independence administrations refused to recognize the credentials of traditional Muslim schools. As a result, there is broad Muslim resentment of certain advantages that Christians are perceived to enjoy in employment and educational opportunities. Muslim leaders have complained that the number of Muslim students invited to enroll in government-run schools still was not equal to the number of Christians. In turn Christians criticize what they perceive as lingering effects of undue favoritism accorded to Muslims in appointments, jobs, and scholarships by former President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, a Muslim. Christian leaders agree that the Muslim student population in institutions of higher learning is disproportionately low; however, they blame this condition on historical circumstances rather than discrimination.

The Government failed to respond to growing tensions between the Muslim and Christian communities (see Section III). The Government recognized that a problem exists, but it chose not to take action. The Government cancelled several meetings with Muslim and Christian leaders aimed at improving relations between the two communities. Even senior Muslim officials in the Government appear unwilling to address the problem, apart from general criticism of those who would foment religious conflict. In 1999 President Mkapa met with leaders of the Muslim community at a Dar es Salaam mosque to listen to their grievances and propose solutions; however, urban Muslim leaders claim that no action has been taken to address their concerns.

The overall situation for women is less favorable in Zanzibar, which has a majority Muslim population, than on the mainland. Although women generally are not discouraged from seeking employment outside the home, women of Zanzibar, and on many parts of the mainland, face discriminatory restrictions on inheritance and ownership of property because of concessions by the Government and courts to customary and Islamic law. While provisions of the Marriage Act provide for certain inheritance and property rights for women, the application of customary, Islamic,

or statutory law depends on the lifestyle and stated intentions of the male head of household. The courts have upheld discriminatory inheritance claims, primarily in rural areas. Under Zanzibari law, unmarried women under the age of 21 who become pregnant are subject to 2 years' imprisonment.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

Prior to the October 2000 elections, government officials called on political candidates to avoid using religion as a campaign issue and urged the public to reject religiously-oriented campaigns. The CUF party, perceived by many voters as being the "party of Muslims," apparently lost ground on the mainland due to the heavy emphasis that its candidates placed on religious issues. In January 2001, a demonstration on Pemba, which is 98 percent Muslim, turned violent and led to the deaths of at least 23 protestors, and also sparked an outburst of religious enmity. Police killed two persons, including one imam. Following the demonstration, there were reports of isolated cases of harassment of individuals who were perceived as supporters of radical Islam, including the alleged forcible shaving of beards of certain Muslims who had been detained.

In July 1999, police used tear gas and clubs to disperse a peaceful demonstration by Muslims protesting a ban on Muslim school uniforms by certain public schools. Muslim groups report that subsequently they were allowed to challenge and overturn the bans through use of the judicial system, which ruled that certain traditional religious attire (such as hijab headdress) was permitted by law in all public schools.

In September 1999, police arrested a popular Muslim leader for inciting his followers against other religions. A week later, the police canceled a planned Muslim demonstration to protest his arrest. In October 1999, the Muslim leader was charged with seditious intent and denied bail. There was no further information about this case at the end of the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

While Muslim-Christian relations remained generally stable, tensions rose due to urban Muslim groups' claims of discrimination in government hiring and law enforcement practices (see Section II). Rural Muslim groups do not appear to share urban Muslims' concerns to the same extent. There also were other signs of increased religious tensions between Christians and Muslims.

There were signs of increasing tension between secular and fundamentalist Muslims, as the latter feel that the former have joined with the Government for monetary and other benefits. The fundamentalist Muslims accuse the Government of being a Christian institution, and Muslims in power as being interested only in safeguarding their positions. Fundamentalist Muslims severely criticized secular Muslims who drink alcohol or marry Christian women. Muslim fundamentalists attempted, unsuccessfully, to introduce Muslim traditional dress into the national school system. Fundamentalist groups also have exhorted their followers to vote only for Muslim candidates.

In 2000 a University of Dar es Salaam organization conducted a study of the possible role of religion in impeding the country's future development as a multiparty democracy. The organization, Research, Education and Democracy in Tanzania (REDET), which consists of a number of academics—Muslim and Christian—surveyed the public's views of religion as a potential societal faultline. The results of the study were not published by the end of the period covered by this report.

An interdenominational religious council periodically meets to discuss issues of mutual concern, such as the recent violence in Zanzibar. The council is comprised of Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim representatives. The Muslim representative belongs to the BAKWATA; several urban Muslim leaders and a majority of urban Muslims believe that the BAKWATA is a government-imposed watchdog organization.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

In 2001 the U.S. Embassy sponsored a series of lectures and town hall meetings in Zanzibar that encouraged discussion of tolerance and the role of religion in a democratic society.

TOGO

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total land area of 21,006 square miles and its population is 4,629,000. According to statistics published by the Ministry of Tourism, the population is approximately 22 percent Catholic, 12 percent Sunni Muslim, and 7 percent Protestant. The remaining 59 percent of the population consists of followers of other faiths, including traditional indigenous religions. Many converts to the larger faiths continue to practice some rituals of traditional indigenous religions. The number of atheists in the country is unknown but is thought to be small. Most Muslims live in the central and northern regions.

Missionary groups active in the country represent Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels generally protects this right in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion.

The Government establishes requirements for recognition of religious organizations outside the three main faiths—Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam, which are recognized officially. Applications must be submitted to the Interior Ministry's Division of Civil Security. A religious organization must submit its statutes, a statement of doctrine, bylaws, names and addresses of executive board members, the pastor's diploma, a contract, a site map, and a description of its financial situation. The Interior Ministry issues official recognition. The Civil Security Division also has enforcement responsibilities when there are problems or complaints associated with a religious organization.

The Government recognizes 97 religious groups, of which most are smaller Protestant groups and some new Muslim groups. Members of those religions not officially recognized are permitted to practice their religion, but have no legal standing. In 2000, 38 religious groups submitted applications to the government requesting official recognition. Since 1991, 317 groups have applied for recognition. There was no information available regarding the criteria for recognition, the number of rejections, or details about the groups that had been rejected. If an application provides insufficient information for recognition to be granted, the application often remains open indefinitely.

There are no special requirements for foreign missionary groups, which are subject to the same registration requirements as other groups.

Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic schools are common.

The Government-owned television station, TV Togo, and the Ministry of Communication sponsored a program during the period covered by this report to foster Islamic-Christian understanding.

In January 2001, President Gnassingbe Eyadema, a Protestant, once again invited Catholic, Muslim, and Protestant religious leaders to an ecumenical prayer service to commemorate the anniversary of his military takeover. Eyadema has invited these religious leaders to this service for at least 10 years. For the third year in a row, the Catholic Church declined the invitation to attend the "Day of National

Liberation” service, stating that it is inappropriate to hold a worship service in a government building.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Constitution prohibits the establishment of political parties based on religion and states explicitly that “no political party should identify itself with a region, an ethnic group, or a religion.” Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims occupy positions of authority in local and the central government.

According to an international NGO, the authorities established an interministerial commission in early 2000 to investigate the activities of all religious groups in the country whose mode of worship allegedly harms the welfare of society. The Prime Minister expressed concern about the methods of worship by religious groups that beat cymbals and drums at night; however, the Government took no measures to restrict these groups during the period covered by this report.

The 17-member National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), elected by the National Assembly, includes Catholic, Muslim, and Protestant representatives. The CNDH hears appeals by religious organizations that the Government has disallowed principally for disturbing the peace. For example, in past years, Jehovah’s Witnesses were not allowed to practice because they would not take an oath to the national flag; however, this restriction was eased in 1998.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government’s refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Relations between the various religious communities generally are amicable. Members of different faiths regularly invite one another to their respective ceremonies. Intermarriage across religious lines is common.

The Christian Council was founded in 1978 to address common issues among Protestant denominations. The Council comprises the Assemblies of God, Protestant Methodist, the Baptist Convention, Pentecostal churches, Seventh-Day Adventist, Lutheran, and Evangelical Presbyterian denominations. The Council continues to debate whether to expand its membership to include other Protestant organizations. Catholics and Protestants collaborate frequently through the Biblical Alliance.

Under the leadership of the Archbishop of Lome, the Catholic Church continued to refrain from delivering political sermons praising President Eyadema. The Archbishop’s predecessor had used the pulpit to praise the President, but such sermons alienated the congregation, which called for the former Archbishop’s dismissal.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

UGANDA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there were some restrictions on religious freedom.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion; however, on one occasion local officials forcibly disbanded a church group. Several religious organizations that were disbanded forcibly in April and May 2000 after members of a religious group killed over 1,000 citizens remained disbanded at the end of the period covered by this report. Unlike in the previous reporting period, there were no reports that security officials harassed or detained Muslims.

There are amicable relations between the various religious communities, and no religious group actively impinges upon the rights of others to worship; however, the backlash from the killing of over 1,000 citizens in the spring of 2000 at the hands of a religious group resulted in negative public attitudes toward Christian groups that are viewed as cults.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of approximately 146,556 square miles, and its population is approximately 23 million. Christianity is the majority religion, and its adherents constitute approximately 66 percent of the population. Muslims account for approximately 16 percent of the population. A variety of other religions, including traditional indigenous religions, Hinduism, the Baha'i Faith, and Judaism are practiced freely and, combined, make up about 18 percent of the population. Among the Christian groups, the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches claim approximately the same number of followers, accounting for perhaps 95 percent of the nation's professed Christians. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, the Baptist Church, the Unification Church, and the Pentecostal Church, among others, are active. Muslims are mainly Sunni, although there also are Shi'a followers of the Aga Khan among the Asian community. Several branches of Hinduism also are represented among the Asian community. There are few atheists.

In many areas, particularly in rural settings, some religions tend to be syncretistic. Deeply held traditional indigenous beliefs commonly are blended into established religious rites or observed alongside such rites, particularly in areas that are predominantly Christian.

Missionary groups of several denominations are present and active in the country, including the Pentecostal Church, the Baptist Church, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Muslims and adherents of other minority religions occupy positions of authority in local and central government.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, there were some restrictions.

All religious organizations are required to register with the Nongovernmental Organizations Board. The Government continued to refuse to grant registration to the World Last Message Warning Church, due to its leader's pending criminal charges and continuing suspicions following the 2000 cult killings of over 1,000 citizens. There were no reports that the Government refused to grant such registration to any other religious organization.

Missionary groups face no particular restrictions on their activity. Foreign missionary groups, like foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGO's), must register with the Government. There were no reports that the Government refused to grant registration to any foreign missionary groups.

Permits also are necessary for the construction of facilities, including religious facilities. There were no reports that the Government refused to grant such permits to any religious organization.

Private Koranic and Christian schools are common. There is no religious instruction in public schools.

Prisoners are given the opportunity to pray on days appropriate to their faith. Muslim prisoners usually are released from work duties during the month of Ramadan.

On February 7, 2001, the Electoral Commission announced that the date of the presidential election would be moved from March 6 to March 7 because of the Muslim Eid holiday on March 6; the date later was changed to March 12 due to problems with voter registration.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

On August 16, 2000, the Jinja Resident District Commissioner ordered the closure of the United Methodist Church in Jinja Town following allegations that the church forbade members from seeking medical treatment. On August 13, 2000, a church member suffering from asthma died, reportedly after 3 days of fasting and refusing medication.

Some local governments have restricted the hours of operations of religious organizations that are viewed as cults, for example, prohibiting nighttime prayer meetings. The Government largely has ignored calls for these churches to be shut down and their followers returned to mainstream churches. However, in the wake of discoveries in March, April, and May 2000 that over 1,000 citizens had been killed by members of a religious group, several religious organizations were disbanded forc-

ibly. In early April 2000, following allegations that the Revival Pentecostal Church in Nseko village, Kasangati, allowed youths to engage in sexual relationships, the deputy Resident District Commissioner (RDC) closed the church. In mid-April 2000, police in Kasese district banned the activities of a church group based in Hima public school, Busongora. On May 19, 2000, the Bushenyi resident district commissioner ordered the closure of the Church of the Servants of the Eucharistic Hearts of Jesus and Mary, which allegedly was operating in the guise of a vocational school. None of these churches were reopened by the end of the period covered by this report.

The Government continued to refuse to grant registration to the World Last Message Warning Church, due to its leader's pending criminal charges and continuing suspicions following the 2000 cult killings of over 1,000 citizens.

Unlike in the first half of 2000, there were no reports during the period covered by this report that local officials dispersed meetings of religious groups.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

In August 2000, police in Rukungiri district arrested Innocent Bitungwabariho, a leader of the Jesus Christ the King of Salvation church. Bitungwabariho allegedly confined his family to their house for 5 years in order to prevent them from being exposed to sin. On August 22, he appeared before court in Rukungiri district on charges of participating in an unlawful assembly, being idle and disorderly, and child neglect under section 15, sub-section (I) of the Penal Code Act. Bitungwabariho remained in detention, and his case was ongoing at the end of the period covered by this report.

On August 7, 2000, Nabi Besweri Kiswabuli, the apostle of the Issa Massiya religious group in Iganga district, was charged with assaulting and injuring Daniel Tsubira, a former follower. The alleged assault occurred on March 2, 1999, in Bubaga village, Busiki county. Kiswabuli and others reportedly attacked Tsubira when he returned to Massiya Camp to retrieve his belongings. The case was pending in court at the end of the period covered by this report.

On July 18, 2000, Wilson Bushara, leader of the World Last Message Warning Church, and 17 of his followers were arrested and charged with defilement, rape, abduction, and theft. The group reportedly defiled and raped a 15-year-old girl between August and September 18, 1999. On November 23, 2000, the Director of Public Prosecutions ordered that Bushara and his followers be transferred from the Buganda Magistrates' Court to Luweero where the offenses allegedly were committed. On May 13, 2001, the Kampala High Court dismissed the charge of defilement against Bushara due to lack of evidence; however, the other charges and cases against his followers were pending before the Luweero district Magistrates' Court at the end of the period covered by this report.

Following the killings on March 16, 2000, of more than 500 followers of the Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God and the discovery of mass graves of approximately 500 other persons on properties in Kanungu belonging to the group, the Government launched investigations of numerous religious groups. Three groups were disbanded forcibly and one religious leader was arrested. On March 29, 2000, former Rukungiri Assistant Resident District Commissioner (ARDC) Rev. Francis Mutazindwa was arrested for failing to act on information about the activities of the Kanungu cult while he was the ARDC. He was released on bond on April 29, 2000, pending further investigation. In December 2000, the Government appointed a commission of inquiry to investigate the Kanungu killings and the operation of other religious-based NGO's; however, due to the Ministry of Internal Affairs' lack of funds, the Commission's investigation has been delayed.

As of the end of the period covered by this report, 38 members of the Islamic Tabliq group who were arrested in 1995 on treason charges remained in detention pending trial. The Government maintains that the group members are terrorists, but some members have said that they are held for religious reasons. The group was offered amnesty under a law signed in January 2000; however, the 38 members refused amnesty and chose to stand trial. Under the amnesty, 28 other Tabliq Muslims arrested on the same charges were pardoned and released in 2000.

There were no developments in the May 2000 case involving five members of the Kisaaba Redeemed Church in Kayunga, Mukono district—Benon Kaye, Monica Isabirye, Ezeza Kisakye Lukwago, Catherine Nagujja, and Willinstone Nagenda—who were arrested and charged with causing the death of a church member by denying him medical treatment. Kaye and Isabirye were released on bail, and the other members were freed.

There were no developments in the May 2000 case involving five members of the Mulungomu Full Gospel Church in Luweero—John Mwebaza, Florence Mirembe, Fred Mwesigwa, Sarah Mugabi, and Geoffrey Beyongera—who were arrested after

reportedly telling their followers to fast and sell their property. The five remained in custody at Luzira prison at the end of the period covered by this report.

Unlike in the previous reporting period, there were no reports that security officials harassed or detained Muslims.

Although there have been reports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that some Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) troops may have targeted Catholic clergy, subsequent reports from the DRC indicate that UPDF troops were not involved in such incidents.

On October 1, 2000, in Aruu county, Kitgum district, LRA rebels ambushed and killed Father Raffaele di Bari, an Italian Roman Catholic priest, as he traveled on a road southwest of Kitgum. Bari was the parish priest of Pajule Catholic Church and had lived in the country since 1959. Bari was not targeted because he was a priest.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are amicable relations between the various religious communities, and no religious group actively impinges upon the right of others to worship. However, the backlash from the spring 2000 killing of over 1,000 citizens at the hands of a religious group resulted in negative public attitudes toward fringe Christian groups. Some officials of "mainstream" Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim religious organizations have called for the closure of Christian churches, which are viewed as cults.

Early in 2001, the heads of the Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, and Islamic faiths organized an Inter-Religious Council; however, the organization's structure had not been determined by the end of the period covered by this report. The purpose of the organization is to strengthen inter-religious dialogue among the main religious groups and to advocate on social issues of concern to all groups.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

ZAMBIA

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 290,586 square miles and its population is estimated at 10,285,631. Approximately 85 percent of the population are Christian; 5 percent are Muslim; 5 percent adhere to other faiths, including Hinduism and the Baha'i Faith; and 5 percent are atheist.

The Christian faith was introduced by foreign missionary groups in the 1890's. The majority of indigenous persons, spread throughout the country, either are Roman Catholic or Protestant. Currently there is an upsurge of new Pentecostal churches, commonly known as the "born again" churches, which have attracted many young persons into their ranks.

Muslims are concentrated in certain parts of the country where citizens of Asian origin have settled along the railroad line from Lusaka to Livingstone, in Chipata, and in the eastern province. Most citizens of Asian origin are Muslims, although Hindus constitute a small percentage. A limited number of indigenous persons also are Muslim.

Foreign missionary groups operate in the country and include the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, and the Church of God.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

Although a 1996 amendment to the Constitution declared the country a Christian nation while providing for freedom of religion in practice, the Government generally respects the right of all faiths to worship freely.

There are governmental controls that require the registration of religious groups. The Government approves all applications for registration from religious groups without discrimination. There were no reports that the Government rejected any religious groups that attempted to register or obtain licenses.

There were no reports that foreign missionary groups faced any special requirements or restrictions.

The Government permits religious instruction in public schools. Such instruction is conducted in the dominant Christian religion; however, it is not mandatory and students may be excused from it. Religious instruction in Islam and other faiths is conducted in private schools owned and controlled by those faiths.

Some religious organizations operate radio stations and television networks.

An office for religious affairs at the level of deputy minister in the President's Office at State House is responsible for dealing with issues that pertain to religion and worship, and to the promotion of state-church understanding and interfaith dialog.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Zambia Episcopal Conference, the Christian Council of Zambia, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia were criticized by individuals, including some members of the Government, for publicly opposing efforts to amend the Constitution to enable the President to seek a third term of office. A Catholic bishop was criticized by supporters of the President when he read a pastoral letter criticizing the third-term campaign during a church service. The Government subsequently apologized to the bishop for this behavior. In spite of the criticism of these churches for taking a stand on a political issue, these organizations were able to organize activities freely to mobilize public opinion on the third-term issue.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are amicable relations between the various religious communities.

Leaders of various ecumenical movements, such as the Zambia Episcopal Conference, the Christian Council of Zambia, and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, hold regular meetings to promote mutual understanding and interfaith dialog, and to discuss national issues.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

ZIMBABWE

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, a law that criminalizes purporting to practice witchcraft and accusing persons of practicing witchcraft reportedly was viewed as restrictive by some practitioners of indigenous religions.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relations between the various religious communities contributed to religious freedom. The Government and the religious communities historically have had good relations.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

SECTION I. RELIGIOUS DEMOGRAPHY

The country has a total area of 240,122 square miles, and its population is estimated at 11,342,521. Between 60 and 70 percent of the population belong to the mainstream Christian denominations, with between 2 and 3 million persons identifying themselves as Roman Catholic. There are no reliable statistics on the exact number of Christian churches or religious movements in the country. The evangelical denominations, mostly Pentecostal churches, and Apostolic groups are the fastest growing religious groups in the country. They appeal to large numbers of disillusioned members from the established churches who reportedly are attracted by promises of miracles and messages of hope at a time of social and economic stress. There is a small Muslim population in the country, estimated at less than 1 percent. The remainder of the population consists of practitioners of Greek Orthodoxy, Jews, practitioners of traditional indigenous religions and indigenous syncretistic religions that mix Christianity and traditional African culture and beliefs, and a small number of Hindus, Buddhists, Baha'is, and atheists.

The dominance of Christianity dates to the early contact of Portuguese traders and Jesuit priests with Africans in the region in the late 1500's. The Jesuits established churches and educational institutions in the Zambezi Valley at that time. Several centuries later, Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Dutch Reformed, and Salvation Army missionaries began to compete aggressively for territorial and spiritual monopolies throughout the country, resulting in "areas of interest" for each of these churches. As a result, many persons identify with the Christian denomination that has had the longest historical connection to their area. President Robert Mugabe is a Roman Catholic who professes to practice his faith actively, and many of those who make up the elite of society tend to be associated with one of the established Christian churches, especially the Anglican and Methodist churches.

Due to the country's colonial and apartheid-like history, the vast majority of the country's black population was prevented from attending government schools, which were restricted to white students. Christian mission schools taught the few blacks who were able to obtain a formal education. Consequently the vast majority of the country's liberation war leadership, who later became the Government's senior officials, were trained by Christian educators.

The Muslim community consists primarily of South Asian immigrants (Indian and Pakistani), migrants from other southern and eastern African countries (Mozambique and Malawi), and a very small number of North African and Middle Eastern immigrants. There are mosques located in several large urban areas, and there are a small number of mosques in rural areas. There are 12 mosques in the capital Harare. The Muslim community generally has been very insular; however, in recent years, the Islamic community has begun proselytizing among the majority black indigenous population with increasing success.

A variety of indigenous churches and groups have emerged from the mainstream Christian churches over the years. Some, such as the Zimbabwe Assembly of God (ZAOG), continue to adhere strictly to Christian beliefs; in fact, they oppose the espousal of traditional religions. Other indigenous groups, such as the Seven Apostles, combine elements of established Christian beliefs with some beliefs based on traditional African culture and religion. These latter groups tend to be centered on a prophetic figure, with members of the congregation identifying themselves as "apostles." These church members wear long white robes and head coverings. Many of these churches date from the early 1920's, when there was widespread racial and religious segregation. Many of the founders of African indigenous churches broke away from Christian missionary churches, and some of their teachings incorporate what has become known as "black consciousness." To a large extent, these churches grew out of the Christian churches' failure to adapt to traditional African culture and religion. These indigenous churches have proliferated as a result of splits among the followers of the different "prophets."

Many persons continue to believe, in varying degrees, in traditional indigenous religions. These persons may attend worship in a westernized Christian church on Sundays but consult with traditional healers during the week. Belief in traditional healers spans both the rural and urban areas. Traditional healers are very common and are licensed and regulated by the Zimbabwe National African Traditional Healers' Association (ZINATHA). Traditional indigenous religions remain rooted deeply.

Foreign missionaries operate in the country, including the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church.

SECTION II. STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, a law that criminalizes both purporting to practice witchcraft and accusing persons of practicing witchcraft reportedly was viewed as restrictive by some practitioners of indigenous religions. There is no state religion. The Government generally recognizes all religions.

The Government does not require religious institutions to be registered. Religious organizations that operate schools or medical facilities are required to register those specific institutions with the appropriate ministry regulating those areas. Similarly, religious institutions may apply for tax-exempt status and duty-free privileges with the Customs Department, which generally grants such requests.

The Government permits religious education in private schools. There are Islamic and Hebrew primary and secondary schools in the major urban areas, primarily Harare and Bulawayo. In addition there are several institutions of higher education that include religious studies as a core component of the curriculum. There are two such institutions in Harare—the Catholic University and Arrupe College. There is a Methodist institution in Mutare—the Africa University, and a Seventh-Day Adventist college in Matebeleland. The state-supported University of Zimbabwe also has a Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, which has a multid denominational curriculum and faculty. All these institutions have a religiously mixed student body. In addition there are some non-degree awarding institutions, such as teacher training colleges, that also focus on religious studies.

Christian missions provided the first hospitals to care for black citizens. There are 123 hospitals and clinics in the country that fall under the Zimbabwe Association of Christian Hospitals, an association that consists of largely mainstream Christian churches. The individual churches are the predominant source of funding for maintaining these hospitals because of the Government's increasing inability to provide essential services. The Government does provide small subsidies to facilitate the hospitals' functions, but these make up only a small percentage of the hospitals' operating budgets.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Witchcraft—widely understood to encompass attempts to harm others not only by magic but also by covert means of established efficacy such as poisons—traditionally has been a common explanation for diseases of which the causes were unknown. Although traditional indigenous religions generally include or accommodate belief in the efficacy of witchcraft, they generally approve of harmful witchcraft only for defensive or retaliatory purposes and purport to offer protection against it. In recent years, interest in healing through traditional religion and through prayer reportedly has increased as HIV/AIDS has infected an estimated one-fourth of the adult population, and affordable science-based medicines effective in treating HIV/AIDS have remained unavailable.

The 1890 Witchcraft Suppression Act (WSA), as amended in 1989, criminalizes purporting to practice witchcraft, accusing persons of practicing witchcraft, hunting witches, and soliciting persons to name witches; penalties include imprisonment for up to 7 years. The law defines witchcraft as “the use of charms and any other means or devices adopted in the practice of sorcery,” and provides punishments for intending to cause disease or injury to any person or animal through the use of witchcraft. Since 1997 ZINATHA has proposed amendments to the 1989 law that would redefine witchcraft only as the practice of sorcery with the intent to cause harm, including illness, injury, or death; however, mainstream Christian churches reportedly have opposed such legislation. Human rights groups also generally supported the existing WSA; the Act has been used since independence primarily to protect persons, primarily women, who have been accused falsely of causing harm to persons or crops in rural areas where traditional religious practices are strong.

There is some tension between the Government and some indigenous African churches because of the latter's preference for prayer over science-based medical practices that result in the reduction of avoidable childhood diseases and deaths in those communities. Some members of the indigenous churches and groups believe in healing through prayer only and refuse to have their children vaccinated. The Ministry of Health has had limited success in vaccinating children against communicable childhood diseases in these religious communities. Human rights activists

also have criticized these indigenous churches for their sanctioning of marriages of underage girls.

President Mugabe has expressed skepticism about the increasing membership in evangelical and indigenous churches and has indicated that he believes that they could be subversive. According to press reporting, he has refused to meet with bishops from indigenous churches since 1997.

The Government maintains a monopoly on television broadcasting through the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), despite a broadcasting law passed in 2001 that permits one independent television broadcaster but imposes stringent licensing requirements. The Government permits limited religious broadcasting on ZBC and advertising in the government-controlled press by the older, established Christian churches, as well as new evangelical churches and institutions, such as The 700 Club and World Vision. Programming produced by the U.S.-based Christian Broadcasting Network is shown on ZBC. The Government generally follows the recommendations of the Religious Advisory Board, an umbrella grouping of Christian denominations, on appropriate religious material to broadcast. Muslims, who are not represented on the board, approached the advisory board about obtaining access to airtime. The Roman Catholic chairman of the board is not opposed to recommending that Muslims be given airtime commensurate with their numbers in the country, so long as other religions are not denigrated in the material presented. However, the chairman acknowledged that other evangelical church groups are more hostile to Islam and are unlikely to support the inclusion of Islamic programming in the already limited religious broadcasting block. While ZBC officials with whom the chairman raised this issue in the past had indicated informally that Islamic religious material would be included on ZBC, none had been broadcast by the end of the period covered by this report. The chairman of the Religious Advisory Board believes that this is because Muslims represent too small of a percentage of society to take up minimal religious airtime or to merit membership on the advisory board.

In the last few years, due to inadequate resources, the Government has returned several former church schools that it had taken over at independence to their respective churches. The Government has returned nearly all of the secondary schools and a few of the primary schools that it seized from the churches after independence. Most former church schools that the Government still controls are used as primary schools in the rural areas. The country has had a long history of Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist primary and secondary schools. Since independence there also has been a proliferation of evangelical basic education schools. The Christian schools constitute one-third of the schools in the country, with the Catholic Church having the majority.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

The Government and government supporters targeted some clergymen because they strongly criticized the state-sanctioned, politically motivated crimes and violence during the period prior to the June 2000 parliamentary elections and urged the Government to restore peace in the country (see Section III). In March 2001, authorities ordered Paul Andrianatos, an Anglican priest with South African citizenship, to leave the country days after he had made anti-government remarks at the funeral of slain white farmer Gloria Olds. Andrianatos had presided over the funeral of Olds' son Martin, who also was killed by alleged ruling party supporters in April 2000 (see Section III).

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

SECTION III. SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

There are generally amicable relations among the various religious communities. The Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Baha'i, and Buddhist religious communities are relatively small and generally are not in competition with Christian denominations for converts. Catholic Church officials say they welcome interfaith dialog with Muslims. Some of the evangelical churches have fought attempts by some Muslims to require the selling of "halaal," or kosher, meat at non-Muslim shops.

There are at least four umbrella religious organizations primarily focused on interdenominational dialog among Christians and other interreligious activities. However, Muslims are not represented in any of these organizations, and there is no vehicle for formal Christian-Muslim dialog. Muslims have complained of discrimi-

nation by private employers who refuse to allow them sufficient time to worship at their mosques on Fridays.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) is an umbrella organization of all non-Catholic ecumenical Christian missionary churches except for evangelical organizations. It maintains a secretariat in Harare, conducts development programs, has a Justice and Peace desk, and collaborates with the much older Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP). The Catholic Church and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference have observer status within the ZCC, and relations generally are cooperative. Some members of the Christian community are hesitant to support Catholics joining the ZCC because of memories of the inability of religious leaders to work together during the liberation war era, and they fear a repeat of that experience. The ZCC also has worked with other church groups and civil society organizations on social issues. The ZCC initially provided a secretariat for the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a respected nongovernmental organization formed to create a new constitution. After a 2-year collaboration, the ZCC withdrew from the NCA over political direction and leadership style differences, although individual churches subsequently rejoined. The ZCC generally is seen as supportive of President Mugabe and does not criticize the President or his Government frequently. However, a rift between the ZCC and the Government emerged when the ZCC and NCA tried to bring together the different parties working on election issues and the Government refused to participate, branding the ZCC as the enemy. Members of the Government resent the ZCC for its role in helping establish the NCA.

The Heads of Denominations (HOD) is a pragmatic association of Catholic and other Christian denominations that has no spiritual or theological emphasis. It was created to enable collaboration among Christian groups and the Government in the operation of religious schools and hospitals. The HOD provides a vehicle for Christian churches to speak to the Government with a common voice on policy issues and includes the Catholic Church, which operates a significant number of the rural hospitals and schools in the country. The HOD has a loose structure and no office. The HOD's secretarial support is provided by the general secretariat of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), and its secretary general holds the same position in the ZCBC. The education secretaries of the various churches work together under the HOD, as does the religious advisory board to the ZBC. This broad grouping of churches under the HOD also collaborate on a wide range of social issues including HIV/AIDS education and, in conjunction with the ZCC, the Christian churches have addressed the declining economic conditions affecting their members across the country. The HOD continues to deliberate over the role religious institutions should play in combating the HIV/AIDS crisis. Many churches already operate programs designed to help the victims of HIV/AIDS; for example, the Catholic Church and other religious and lay persons operate a center for persons infected with HIV/AIDS called "Mashambanzou" in Harare.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) is an umbrella organization of loosely affiliated evangelical churches that was established in the early 1980's. The fellowship has observer status with the HOD but does not work closely with either the ZCC or Catholic Church. However, the evangelical and Catholic churches do collaborate in the broadcasting of religious programs.

Fambidzano, which means "walking together," is a relatively new grouping of indigenous churches. A South African Dutch Reformed Church theologian and social anthropologist, Inus Daneel, who has researched these churches in South Africa and Zimbabwe, founded the organization in the mid-1970's. Fambidzano was created to give the leaders of these churches more theological and biblical education, according to Daneel. There is little dialog between Fambidzano and the Catholic Church; however, the two organizations are discussing the need to work with the indigenous churches to which many persons are turning because of their emphasis on physical healing and spiritual salvation.

ZINATHA is an organization that represents traditional indigenous religions. The head of that organization is a university professor and vocal Anglican who is working to increase interreligious dialog between ZINATHA and mainstream Christian churches.

One area of ecumenical collaboration has been translation of the Bible into the majority language, Shona. Several priests and ministers have worked on this project since 1987.

There were reports of growing tensions between mainstream Christian churches and practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. A notable feature of some of the indigenous churches is the acceptance of polygamy among some of its members. Sexual abuse, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the avoidance of modern medicines also are growing problems within these churches. In addition leaders of the Christian

churches reportedly opposed the repeal or modification of the Witchcraft Suppression Act sought by practitioners of traditional indigenous religions. In previous years, several leaders of Christian churches reportedly criticized a perceived increase in "Satanism" in the country. Acts of Satanism allegedly included drinking human blood and eating human flesh; however, there were no reports of such activity during the period covered by this report.

Unlike in the previous reporting period, there were no reports of ritual murders associated with traditional religious practices, and the Government generally enforces the law against murder in the case of ritual murders. Gordon Chavanduka, chairman of ZINATHA reportedly has stated that the black-market demand for human body parts used in making potions has increased greatly in recent years. Some observers suggested that this development might be associated with the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country, and the lack of affordable science-based medicines for treating infected persons. In previous reporting periods, there were reports that persons killed children for body parts for use in practicing healing rituals associated with traditional religions. In July 1999, Faber Chidarikire, a Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front official and mayor of the northern town of Chinhoyi, was charged with murdering a 13-year-old girl in 1987, but he was released on bail shortly thereafter following intervention by the Attorney General; there were reports that Chidarikire cut off the girl's ear and excised her genitals. Chidarikire was tried for the murder of the 13-year-old girl in June 2001; however, after the trial, a judgment in the case was deferred. In a separate case in 1995, an examination of a severed head found in Chidarikire's car in 1994 indicated that it had been severed with a blade, not in a car accident as Chidarikire had maintained.

Several key church leaders and organizations strongly criticized the state-sanctioned, politically motivated crimes and violence during the period prior to the June 2000 parliamentary elections and urged the Government to restore peace in the country. Since the elections, church groups throughout the country gradually have become more vocal in their criticism of the Government for the continuation of politically motivated violence. In an unusual public statement on May 3, 2001, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference criticized the Government for allowing war veterans to conduct a campaign of urban intimidation and called on the Government to restore the rule of law. The Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Association responded by warning the bishops to "mind their own business" or face unspecified consequences. In 2000 a Catholic clergyman, Father Fidelis Mukonori, publicly engaged in an effort to find a negotiated solution to the occupation of commercial farms by war veterans, and he helped facilitate meetings between both sides and with President Mugabe. In late 2000, Pius Ncube, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, fled to Germany after receiving numerous death threats for writing public letters accusing the Government of fueling political violence and urging citizens to exercise their right to vote. In April 2000, Anglican priest Tim Neil of Harare publicly chastised President Mugabe for condoning commercial farm invasions. Father Neil distributed pamphlets at his Harare parish that questioned the President's legitimacy to remain in office in light of the chaos he said that Mugabe had caused in the country. Father Neil subsequently received a death threat letter signed by Ngonidzashe Mutasa, the secretary general of the Revival of African Conscience, a previously unknown organization with no established following or platform. The police later apprehended Mutasa, and his case was pending at the end of the period covered by this report.

Unlike in previous years, there were no reports that government supporters attacked church workers whom they suspected of opposition support; however, in early 2001, government supporters threatened clinic workers at the St. Alberts Mission in Mashonaland Central province with violence if they continued to treat opposition supporters. Also in early 2001, a nun in Manicaland province was forced into hiding after receiving threats for failing to treat ruling party supporters fairly.

SECTION IV. U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

The U.S. Government supports religious and other constitutionally protected freedoms through demarches to the Government, nondenominational financial support for community development projects, which often are associated with religious institutions, and regular dialog with and support for civil society organizations that advocate and monitor respect for human rights, including freedom of religion.